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PERLYCROSS.

BY R. D. BLACKMORE.

CHAPTER XXIV.

A WAGER.

It was true enough that Mr. Pen-niloe was gone to London, as Gronow said; but it was not true that otherwise he would have held a prayer-meeting every day in Lady Waldron's room for the benefit of her case. He would have been a great support and strength to Inez in her anxiety, and doubtless would have joined his prayers with hers; that would have been enough for him. Dr. Gronow was a man who meant well upon the whole, but not in every crick and cranny as a really fine individual does. But the parson was even less likely than the doctor to lift a latch plugged by a lady against him.

"Thyatira, do you think that you could manage to see to the children, and the butcher's bill, during the course of next week?" he enquired, when the pupils were off for their holiday, with accordions and pan-pipes and pea-shooters. "I have particular business in London. Only Betty Cork and old Job Tapscott have come to my readings of Solomon's Song, and both of them are as deaf as milestones. Master Harry will be home again in three days' time, and when he is in the house you have no fear, though your confidence should be placed much higher.

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Master Michael is stronger of late, and if we can keep shocking stories from him, his poor little head may be right again. There really has been no proof at all of the existence of any Spring-heeled Jack, and he would never come here to earn his money. He may have been mentioned in Prophecy, as the Wesleyan Minister declared, but I have failed to come across the passage. Our Church does not deal in those exciting views, and does not recognise dark lanterns."

"No sir, we are much soberer like; but still there remains the Seven Vials."

The parson was up to snuff, if the matter may be put upon so low a footing; Mrs. Muggridge had placed her arms akimbo, in challenge theological. He knew that her views were still the lowest of the low, and could not be hoisted by any petard to the High Church level; and the worst of it is that such people are pat with awkward points of Holy Writ, as hard to parry as the stroke of Jarnac. In truth he must himself confess that partly thus had Thyatira, at an early and impressive age, been induced to join the Church, when there chanced to be a vacancy for a housemaid at the parsonage. It was in his father's parish, where her father, Stephen Muggridge, occupied a farm belonging to the Rev.

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Isaac Penniloe. Philip, as a zealous Churchman, urged that the parson's chief tenant should come to church, but the Reverend Isaac took a larger view, preferring his tangible cornland to his spiritual vineyard. "You had better let Stephen alone," he said; "you would very soon get the worst of it, with all your new Oxford theology. Farmer Steve is a wonderfully stout Antipedobaptist; and he searches the Scriptures every day, which leaves no chance for a Churchman who can only find time on a Saturday."

This dissuasion only whetted the controversial appetite, and off set Philip with his Polyglot Bible under his arm. When Farmer Stephen saw him coming, he smiled a grim and gallant smile, being equally hot for the combat. Says he, after a few preliminary passes, "Now, young sir, look here! I'll show 'e a text as you can't explain away, with all Oxford College at the back of thee. Just you turn to Gospel of John, third chapter and fifth verse, and you read it after me. 'Except a man be born of water and of the spirit, he cannot enter into the Kingdom of God.' The same in your copy, bain't it now? Then according to my larning, m. a. n. spells *man*, and b. a. b. e. spells *babe*. Now till you can put b. a. b. e. in the place of m. a. n. in that there text, what becomes of your Church baptism?"

The farmer grinned gently at the parson, in the pride of triumph, and looked round for his family to share it.

"Farmer Stephen, that sounds well," replied the undaunted Philip; "but perhaps you will oblige me by turning over a few leaves, as far as the sixteenth chapter of the same Gospel and verse twenty-one. You see how it begins with reference to the pains of a mother, and then occur these words—'She remembereth no more the anguish, for joy that a *man* is born into the world.' Now was that man born full-grown, Farmer Stephen?"

The farmer knitted his brows, and stared; there was no smile left upon

his face; but in lieu of it came a merry laugh from beside his big oaken chair, and the head of her class in the village school was studying his countenance.

"Her can go to the parsonage," quoth the Antipedobaptist. "Her won't take no harm in a household where they know their Bible so."

Farmer Stephen was living still; and like a gentleman had foregone all attempts to recapture his daughter. With equal forbearance Penniloe never pressed his own opinions concerning smaller matters upon his pious housekeeper, and therefore was fain to decline, as above, her often proffered challenges.

"There are many things still very dark before us," he answered with his sweet sad smile; "let us therefore be instant in prayer, while not neglecting our worldly duties. It is a worldly duty now which takes me from my parish, much against my own desires. I shall not stay an hour more than can be helped, and shall take occasion to forward, if I can, the interests of our restoration fund."

Mrs. Muggidge, when she heard of that, was ready at once to do her best. Not that she cared much about the church repairs, but that her faithful heart was troubled by her master's heavy anxieties. As happens (without any one established exception) in such cases, the outlay had proved to be greatly vaster than the most exhaustive estimate. Mr. Penniloe felt himself liable for the repayment of every farthing; and though the contractors at Exeter were most lenient and considerate (being happily a firm of substance), his mind was much tormented (at the lower tides of faith) about it. At least twelve hundred pounds was certain to fall due at Christmas, that season of peace and good will for all Christians who can pay for it. Even at that date there were several good and useful Corporations, Societies, Associations, ready to help the Church of England, even among white men, when the case was put well before

them. The parson had applied by letter vainly; now he hoped to see the people, and get a trifle out of them.

The long and expensive journey, and the further expense of the sojourn, were quite beyond his resources, drained so low by the House of the Lord; but now the solicitors to the estate of Sir Thomas Waldron Bart. deceased, required his presence in London for essential formalities, and gladly provided the *viaticum*. Therefore he donned his warmest clothes, for the weather was becoming wintry, put the oilskin over his Sunday hat (a genuine beaver, which had been his father's and started in life at two guineas, and even now in its curate stage might stand out for twenty-one shillings), and committing his household solemnly to the care of the Almighty, met the first up-coach before daylight on Monday, when it changed horses at the Blue Ball Inn at the north-east corner of his parish.

All western coaches had been quickened lately by tidings of steam in the north which would take a man nearly a score of miles in one hour; and though nobody really believed in this, the mere talk of it made the horses go. There was one coach already, known by the rather profane name of *Quicksilver*, which was said to travel at the almost impious pace of twelve miles an hour. But few had much faith in this break-neck tale, and *The Quicksilver* flew upon the southern road which never comes nigh the Perle valley. Even so, there were coaches on this upper road which averaged nine miles an hour all the way, foregoing for the sake of empty speed breakfast, and dinner, and even supper on the road. By one of these, called *The Tallyho*, Mr. Penniloe booked his place for London, and arrived there, in good health but very tired, early on the Tuesday morning.

The curate of Perlycross was not at all of the rustic parson type, such as may still be found in many an out-of-the-way parish of Devon. He was not likely to lose himself in the streets of

Mighty Babylon, as London was generally called in those days; and he showed some perception of the right thing to do by putting up at the Old Hummums. His charges for the week were borne by the lawyers upon whose business he was come; and therefore the whole of his time was placed at the disposal of their agents Messrs. Spindrift, Honeysweet, and Hoblin, of Theobald's Road, Gray's Inn. That highly respected firm led him about from office to office, and pillar to post, sometimes sitting upon the pillar, sometimes leaning against the post, according to the usage immemorial of their learned profession. But one of the things he was resolved to do between Doe and Roe, and Nokes and Styles, was to see his old friend Harrison Gowler concerning the outrage at Perlycross.

There happened to be a great run now upon that eminent physician, because he had told a lady of exalted rank, who had a loose tendon somewhere, that she had stepped on a piece of orange-peel five and twenty years ago. Historical research proved this to be too true, although it had entirely escaped the august patient's memory. For this Dr. Gowler was made a baronet at once, his practice was doubled, though it had been very large, and so were all his fees, though they had not been small. In a word, he was the rage, and was making golden hay in the full blaze of a royal sun.

No wonder then that the simple friend for a long time sought the great man vainly. He could not very well write to ask for an interview on the following day because he never knew at what hour he might hope to be delivered from the lawyers; and it never occurred to him to prepay the postage of his card from door to table to either of the haughty footmen. Slow as he was to take offence, he began to fear that it must be meant, for the name of his hotel was on his cards; until as he was turning

away once more, debating with himself whether self-respect would allow him to lift that brass knocker again, the great man himself came point-blank upon him. The stately footman had made a rush for his pint of half-and-half round the corner, and Sir Harrison had to open his own door to show a noble patient forth.

"What, you in London, Penniloe!" And a kind grasp of the hand made it clear that the physician was not himself to blame. In a few quick words it was arranged that the parson should call again at six o'clock, and share his old friend's simple meal. "We shall have two good hours for a talk," said Gowler, "for all the great people are at dinner then. At eight, I have a consultation on."

"I never have what can be called a dinner," Sir Harrison said, when they met again; "only a bit of—I forget what the Greek expression is. There is an American turn for it."

"You must indeed be overdone, if you are forgetting your Greek," replied his friend. "You were far in front of me there always; though I think I was not so far behind in Latin."

"I think you were better in both. But what matter? We have little time now for such delights. How often I wish I were back again at Oxford, ten times poorer, but a thousand times happier. What is the good of my hundred pounds a day? I often get that, and am ashamed of it."

The parson refrained from quoting any of the plentiful advice upon that matter from the very highest authorities. He tried to look cheerfully at his old friend, and did not even shake his head. But a very deep sadness was in his own heart, and yet a confirmation of his own higher faith. Then knowing that the time was very short, and feeling his duty to his own parish, he told the tale he was come to tell; and Sir Harrison listened intently to it.

"I scarcely know what to think," he said. "Even if I were on the

spot, and knew every one whom it was possible to suspect, it would be a terrible puzzle to me. One thing may be said, with confidence amounting almost to certainty, that it is not a medical matter at all. That much I can settle, beyond all doubt, by means which I need not specify. Even with you I cannot enter upon questions so professional. We know that irregular things are done, and the folly of the law compels them. But this is quite out of the course they pursue. However I can make quite certain about all that within a week. Meanwhile you should look for a more likely clue. You have lost invaluable time by concluding, as of course the stupid public would, especially after all the Burke and Harz affairs, that the doctors must be at the bottom of it. Most unlucky that you were so unwell, or you might have set the enquiry on the right track from the first. Surely it must have occurred to you that medical men, as a general rule, are the sharpest fellows of the neighbourhood, except of course,—of course excepting the parsons."

"They are sharper than we are," said the parson with a smile; "but perhaps that is the very thing that tells against our faith in them."

"Very likely; but still it keeps them from uttering mad atrocities. Sir Thomas Waldron, a famous man, a grand old soldier, and above all a wealthy man! Why they could have done no more to a poor old wretch from the workhouse!"

"The crime in that case would have been as great; perhaps greater, because more cowardly."

"You always were a highflyer, my friend. But never mind the criminality; what we want to know is the probability. And to find out that we have to study not the laws of morality, but the rules of human conduct. What was the name of the man I met about the case at your house? Oh, I remember—Gronow; a very shrewd, clear-headed fellow. Well, what does he say about it?"

"As nearly as possible what you have said. Some slight suspicion has fallen upon him; but as I told you, Jemmy Fox has come in for the lion's share of it."

"Poor young fellow! It must be very hard to bear. It will make him hate a profession in which he would have been sure to distinguish himself, because he really loves it. What a thick-headed monster the English public is! They always exult in a wild-geese chase. Are you sure that the body was ever carried off at all?"

"The very question Doctor Gronow asked! Unhappily there can be no doubt whatever upon that point. As I ought to have told you, though I was not there to see it, the search was made in the middle of the day, and with a dozen people round the grave. They went to the bottom, found the brickwork broken down, and no sign of any coffin."

"Well, that ought to lead us to something clear. That alone is almost certain proof of what I said just now. Resurrection-men, as the stupid public calls them, would have taken the body alone. Not only because they escape all charge of felony by doing so, but that it is so much easier; and for many other reasons which you may imagine. I begin to see my way more clearly. Depend upon it, this is some family matter. Some private feud, or some motive of money, or perhaps even some religious scruple lies at the bottom of this strange affair. I begin to think that you will have to go to Spain before you understand it all. How has Lady Waldron behaved about it?"

"She has been most bitter against poor Jemmy." Mr. Penniloe had not heard of what was happening this very week at Walderscourt. "She will not see him, will not hear his name, and is bitter against any one who takes his part. She cannot even bring herself to speak to me, because in common fairness I have done my best for him, against the general opinion and her own firm conclusion.

That is one reason why I am in London now. She will not even act with me in taking probate of the will. In fact it has driven her, as I fear, almost to the verge of insanity, for she behaves most unkindly even to her daughter. But she is more to be pitied than blamed, poor thing."

"I agree with you, in case of all this being genuine. But is it so? Or is it a bit of acting over-acted? I have known women who could act so as to impose upon their own brains."

"It has never once entered my head," replied the simple-minded parson, "to doubt that all she says, and does, is genuine. Even you could not doubt, if you beheld her."

"I am not so sure of that," observed Sir Harrison very drily. "The beauty of your character is the grand simplicity. You have not the least idea of any wickedness."

"My dear fellow," cried the parson deeply shocked; "it is, alas, my sad duty to find out and strive with the darkest cases of the depravity of our fallen race!"

"Of course. But you think none the worse of them for that. It is water on a duck's back to such a man as you. Well, have it so, if you like. I see the worst of their bodies, and you the worst of their souls, as you suppose. But I think you put some of your own into them,—infusion of sounder blood, as it were."

"Gowler, you may think as ill as fallen nature can make you think of all your fellow-creatures!" Mr. Penniloe spoke with a sharpness very seldom found in words of his. "But in fair truth, it is beyond the blackest of all black bitterness to doubt poor Lady Waldron's simple and perfect sincerity."

"Because of her very magnificent eyes," Sir Harrison answered, as if to himself and to meet his own too charitable interjections. "But what has she done, to carry out her wild revenge at an outrage, which she would feel more keenly perhaps than the most sensitive of English women?

Has she moved high and low, ransacked the earth, set all the neighbourhood on fire, and appealed with tears, and threats, and money (which is the strongest of all appeals), to the Cæsar enthroned in London? If she had done any of these things, I fancy I should have heard of them."

For the moment Mr. Penniloe disliked his friend; as a man may feel annoyance at his own wife even, when her mind for some trivial cause is moving on a lower level than his own. "As yet she has not taken any strong steps," he confessed with some reluctance, "because she has been obliged to act under her lawyer's guidance. Remember that she is a foreigner, and knows nothing of our legal machinery."

"Very likely not. But Webber does, Webber her solicitor. I suppose Webber has been very energetic."

"He has not done so much as one might have expected. In fact he has seemed to me rather remiss. He has had his own private hands at work, which as he says is the surest plan; but he has brought no officers from London down. He tells me that in all such cases they have failed; and more than that, they have entirely spoiled the success of all private enquiry."

"It looks to me very much as if private enquiry had no great desire to succeed. My conclusion grows more and more irresistible. Shall I tell you what it is?"

"My dear fellow, by all means do. I shall attach very great importance to it."

"It is simply this,"—Sir Harrison spoke less rapidly than usual; "all your mystery is solved in this—*Lady Waldron knows all about it*. How you all have missed that plain truth puzzles me. She has excellent reasons for restricting the enquiry, and casting suspicion upon poor Fox. Did I not hear of a brother of hers, a Spanish nobleman I think he was?"

"Yes, her twin-brother, the Count de Varcas. She has always been

warmly attached to him; but Sir Thomas did not like him much. I think he has been extravagant. Lady Waldron has been doing her utmost to discover him."

"I dare say. To be sure she has! Advertised largely of course. Oh dear, oh dear! What poor simple creatures we men are in comparison with women!"

Mr. Penniloe was silent. He had made a good dinner, and taken a glass of old port wine; and both those proceedings were very rare with him. Like all extremely abstemious men, when getting on in years, he found his brain not strengthened but confused by the unusual supply. The air of London had upon him that effect which it often has at first upon visitors from the country, quick increase of appetite and hearty joy in feeding.

"Another thing you told me, which confirms my view," resumed the relentless doctor. "The last thing discovered before you came away,—but not discovered, mark you, by her ladyship's agents—was that the cart supposed to have been employed had been traced to a smuggler's hiding-place in a desolate and unfrequented spot, probably in the direction of the coast. Am I right in supposing that?"

"Partly so. It would be towards the sea; though certainly not the shortest way."

"But the best way probably of getting at the coast, if you wished to avoid towns and villages? That you admit? Then all is plain. Poor Sir Thomas was to be exported. Probably to Spain; that I will not pretend to determine, but I think it most likely; perhaps to be buried in Catholic soil and with Catholic ceremonial, which they could not do openly here because of his own directions. How simple the very deepest mystery becomes when once you have the key to it! But how strange that it never occurred to you! I should have thought Gronow at any rate would have guessed it."

"He has more penetration than I

have; I am well aware of that," replied the humble parson; "and you of course have more than either of us. But for all that, Gowler, and although I admit that your theory is very plausible and explains many points that seemed inexplicable, I cannot, and I will not accept it for a moment."

"Where is your difficulty? Is it not simple,—consistent with all that we know of such people, priest-ridden of course, and double-faced, and crafty? Does it not solve every difficulty? What can you urge against it?"

"My firm belief in the honesty, affection, and good faith of women."

"Whew!" The great physician forgot his dignity in the enjoyment of so fine a joke. He gave a long whistle, and then put his thumb to his nose and extended his fingers, as schoolboys of that period did. "Honesty of women, Penniloe! At your age, you surely know better than that. A very frail argument indeed!"

"Because of my age it is perhaps that I do know better. I would rather not discuss the subject. You have your views, and I have mine."

"I am pleased with this sort of thing, because it reminds one so much of boyhood." Sir Harrison stood by the fire, and began to consult his short grey whiskers. "Let me see, how many years is it since I cherished such illusions? Well, they are pleasant enough, while they last. I suppose you never make a bet, Penniloe?"

"Of course not, Gowler. You seem to be as ignorant of clergymen as you are of women."

"Don't be touchy, my dear fellow. Many of the cloth accept the odds, and have the privilege of clergy when they lose. Well, I'll tell you what I will do. You see that little cupboard in the panelling? It has only one key, and the lock is peculiar. Here I deposit,—behold my act and deed—these two fifty-pound notes. You

take the key. Now you shall come, or send either churchwarden, and carry them off for the good of your church-restoration fund, the moment you can prove that my theory is wrong."

"I am not sure," said the clergyman, with a little agitation as the courage of that single glass of port declined, "that this is not too much in the nature of a wager."

"No, there is no wager; that requires two parties. It is simply a question of forfeiture. No peril to a good cause, as you would call it, in case of failure; and a solid gain to it, if I prove wrong. Take the key, my friend. My time is up."

Mr. Penniloe, the most conscientious of mankind and therefore the most gentle, had still some qualms about the innocence of this; but his friend's presumptuous manner hushed them. He dropped the key into his deep watch-pocket, specially secured against the many rogues of London; and there it was when he mounted on *The Magnet* coach at two o'clock on the Friday afternoon, prepared for a long and dreary journey to his home.

The Magnet was one of those calm and considerate coaches which thought a great deal more of the comfort and safety of their passengers and horses than of the fidgety hands of any clock, be it even a cathedral clock, on the whole road from London to Exeter. What are the most important hours of the day? Manifestly those of feeding; each of them is worth any other three. Therefore you lose three times the time you save by omitting your dinner. This coach breakfasted, dined, and supped, and slept on the road, or rather out of it, and started again as fresh as paint quite early enough in the morning.

With his usual faith in human nature Mr. Penniloe had not enquired into these points, but concluded that this coach would rush along in the breathless manner of *The Tallyho*. This leisurely course began to make him very nervous, and when on the

Saturday at two o'clock another deliberate halt was made at a little wayside inn, some fifty miles still from Perlycross, and every one descended with a sprightly air, the clergyman marched up to the coachman to remonstrate. "Unless we get on a little faster," he said, with a kind but anxious smile, "I shall not be at home for Sunday."

"Can't help that, sir. The coach must dine," replied the fat driver, as he pulled his muffler down to give his capacious mouth fair play.

"But—but consider, Mr. Coachman; I must get home. I have my church to serve."

"Must serve the dinner first, sir, if you please," said the landlord coming forward with a napkin, which he waved as if it were worth a score of sermons. "All the gents are waiting, sir, for you to say the grace—hot soup, knuckle of veal, boiled round, and baked potatoes. Gents has to pay, if they dine, or if they don't. Knowing this, all gents do dine. Preach all the better, sir, to-morrow for it."

If this preparation were needful, the curate's sermon would not have been excellent, for anxiety had spoiled his appetite. When at length they lumbered on again, he strove to divert his thoughts by observing his fellow-passengers. And now for the first time he descried, over the luggage piled on the roof, a man with a broad slouched hat and fur cloak, who sat with his back towards him, for Mr. Penniloe had taken his place on the hinder part of the coach. That man had not joined the dinner party, yet no one remained on the coach or in it during the dinner hour, for the weather was cold and windy, with a few flakes of snow flying idly all day and just making little ribs of white upon the road. Mr. Penniloe was not a very observant man, least of all on a Saturday when his mind was dwelling chiefly upon Scriptural subjects; but he could not help wondering how this man came there,

for the coach had not stopped since they left the little inn. This perhaps drew his attention to the man who appeared to be "thoroughly a foreigner," as John Bull in those days expressed it. For he wore no whiskers, but a long black beard streaked with silver, as even those behind could see, for the whirl of the north wind tossed it now and then upon his left shoulder. He kept his head low behind the coachman's broad figure, and appeared to speak to nobody, but smoked cigars incessantly, lighting each from the stump of its predecessor, and scattering much ash about to the discomfort of his neighbours' eyes. Although Mr. Penniloe never smoked, he enjoyed the fragrance of a good cigar perhaps more than the puffer himself does (especially if he puff too vehemently), and he was able to pronounce this man's tobacco very fine.

At length they arrived at Pumpington, about six miles from Perlycross, and here Mr. Penniloe fully expected another halt for supper, and had made up his mind in that case to leave the coach and trudge home on foot. But to his relief they merely changed horses, and did that with some show of alacrity; for they were bound to be at Exeter that night, and the snow was beginning to thicken. At the turnpike-gate two men got up; one of them a sailor, going probably to Plymouth, who mounted the tarpaulin that covered the luggage, and throwing himself flat upon it with a jovial air, made himself quite at home, smoking a short pipe, and waving a black bottle when he could spare time from sucking it. The other man came and sat beside the parson, who did not recognise him at first, for the coach carried only two lamps, both in front, and their light was thrown over their shoulders now and then in rough streams like the beard of the foreigner. All the best coaches still carried a guard, and the Royal Mail was bound to do so; but *The Magnet* towards the end of its career had none.

Mr. Penniloe meekly allowed the new-comer to edge his feet gradually out of the straw nest, and work his own into the heart of it; for now it was truly a shivering and a shuddering night. The steam of the horses and their breath came back in turbid clouds, and the snow, or soft hail (now known as *graupe*) cut white streaks through them into travellers' eyes and danced on the roof like lozenges. Nobody opened mouth, except the sailor; and his was stopped, as well as opened, by the admirable fit of the neck of his rum bottle. But this being overstrained became too soon a hollow consolation; and the rim of the glass rattled drily against his chattering teeth, till he cast it away.

"Never say die, mates, I'll sing you a song. Don Darkimo, give us a cigar to chaw. Never could smoke them things, gentlemen and ladies. Can't 'e speak, or won't 'e then? Never mind, here goes!"

To his own encouragement this jolly fellow, with his neck and chest thrown open and his summer duds on, began to pour forth a rough nautical ballad, not only beyond the pale of the most generous orthodoxy, but entirely out of harmony with the tone of all good society. In plainer words, as stupid a bit of ribaldry and blasphemy as the most advanced period could produce.

Then up rose Mr. Penniloe, and in a firm voice, clear above the piping of the wind and the roar of wheels and rattle of loose harness, administered to that mariner a rebuke so grave and solemn, and yet so full of large kindness and of allowance for his want of teaching, that the poor fellow hung his head and felt a rising in his throat, and, being not advanced beyond the tender stage of intoxication, passed into a liquid stage of terror and repentance. With this the clergyman was content, being of longer experience than to indulge in further homily. But the moment he sat down, up rose the gentleman who had cribbed his straw, and addressed the applauding

passengers. "My friends, the Reverend Penniloe has spoken well and eloquently. But I think you will agree with me, that it would be more consistent of him, and more for the service of the Lord, if he kept his powers of reproof for the use of his own parishioners. He is the clergyman of Perlycross, a place notorious throughout the county for the most infamous of crimes, a place where even the dead are not allowed to sleep in peace."

After this settler the man sat down and turned his back on the parson, who had now recognised him with deep sorrow at his low malevolence. For this was no other than Solomon Pack, watchmaker and jeweller at Pumpington, well known among his intimates as "Pack of lies," from his affection for malignant gossip. Mr. Penniloe had offended him by employing the rival tradesman, Pack's own brother-in-law, with whom he was at bitter enmity. "Mr. Pack, you have done much harm, I fear, and this is very unjust of you," was all that the parson deigned to say. But he had observed with some surprise that, while Pack was speaking, the foreigner turned round and gazed intently, without showing much of his swarthy face, at himself, Philip Penniloe.

Before silence was broken again, *The Magnet* drew up at *The Blue Ball* Inn, where the lane turns off towards Perlycross, and the clergyman, leaving his valise with the landlord, started upon his three-mile trudge. But before he had walked more than a hundred yards he was surprised to see, across the angle of the common, that the coach had stopped again at the top of a slight rise, where a footpath led from the turnpike road towards the northern entrance to Walderscourt. The clouds were now dispersing and the full moon shining brightly, and the ground being covered with newly fallen snow, the light was as good as it is upon many a winter afternoon. Mr. Penniloe was wearing

a pair of long-sight glasses, specially adapted to his use by a skilful optician in London, and he was as proud of them as a child is of his first whistle. Without them the coach might have been a haystack, or a whale, so far as he could tell; with them he could see the horses, and the passengers, and the luggage. Having seen too much of that coach already, he was watching it merely as a test for his new glasses, and the trial proved most satisfactory. "How proud Fay will be," he was thinking to himself, "when I tell her that I can see the big pear-tree from the window, and even the thrushes on the lawn!" But suddenly his interest in the sight increased. The man, who was standing in the road with his figure shown clearly against a snowy bank, was no other than that dark foreigner who had stared at him so intently. There was the slouched hat, and there was the fur cloak, and even the peculiar bend of the neck. A parcel was thrown to him from the roof, and away he went across the common, quite as if he knew the way, through furze and heather to the back entrance of Walderscourt grounds. He could not see the parson in the darker lane below, and doubtless believed himself unseen.

The circumstance aroused some strange ideas in the candid mind of Penniloe. That man, knowing who he was from Pack's tirade, must have been desirous to avoid him, otherwise he would have quitted the coach at *The Blue Ball*, and taken this better way to Walderscourt; for the lane Mr. Penniloe was following led more directly thither by another entrance. What if there were something, after all, in Gowler's too plausible theory? That man looked like a Spaniard, probably a messenger from Lady Waldron's scapegrace brother; for that was his character, if plain truth were spoken without any family gloss upon it. And if he were a messenger, why should he come thus, unless there was something they wanted to conceal?

The curate had not traversed all this maze of meditations, which made him feel very miserable,—for of all things he hated suspiciousness, and that £100, though needed so sadly, would be obtained at too high a cost if the cost were his faith in woman-kind—when, lo! his own church-tower rose grandly before him, its buttresses and stringing courses capped with sparkling snow, and the yew-tree by the battlements feathered with the same, and away to the east the ivy mantle of the abbey, laced and bespangled with the like caprice of beauty showered from the glittering stores of heaven. He put on a spurt through the twinkling air, and the frozen snow crunched beneath his rapid feet; and presently he had shaken hands with Muggridge, and Fay in her nightgown had made a reckless leap from the height of ten stairs into his gladsome arms.

CHAPTER XXV.

A SERMON IN STONE.

Now Sergeant Jakes was not allowed to chastise any boys on Sunday. This made the day hang very heavy on his hands; and as misfortunes never come singly, the sacred day robbed him of another fine resource. For Mr. Penniloe would not permit even Muggridge, the pious, the sage, and the prim, to receive any visitors (superciliously called by the front-door people "followers") upon that blessed day of rest, when surely the sweeter side of human nature is fostered and inspirited from reading-desk and lectern, from gallery and from pulpit.

However even clergymen are inconsistent, as their own wives acknowledge confidentially; and Mr. Penniloe's lectures upon Solomon's Song (a treatise then greatly admired as a noble allegory by High Churchmen) were not enforced at home by any warmth of practice. Thus stood the law; and of all offences upon the Sergeant's Hecatalogue, mutiny was the

most heinous ; therefore he could not mutiny. But surely if Mr. Penniloe could have received, or conceived, a germ of the faintest suspicion concerning this faithful soldier's alternatives on the afternoon of the Sabbath (as Churchmen still entitled it) he would have thrown open every door of kitchen, back-kitchen, scullery, and even pantry to him, that his foot might be kept from so offending. Ay, and more than his foot, his breast, and arm, the only arm he had, and therefore leaving no other blameless.

It is most depressing to record the lapse of such a lofty character, so gallant, faithful, self-denying, true, austere, and simple, though some of these merits may be refused him when the truth comes out, as, alas ! it must. All that can be pleaded in his favour is that ancient, threadbare, paltry, and (as must even be acknowledged) dastardly palliation,—the woman tempted him and he fell ; fell from his brisk and jaunty mien, his noble indifference to the fair and severity to their little ones, his power of example to the rising age, and his pure-minded loyalty to Thyatira, watered by rivers of tea and fed by acres of bread and butter. And the worst of it was that he had sternly resolved, with haughty sense of right and hearty scorn of a previous slip towards backsliding, that none of this weakness should ever, even in a vision, come anigh him any more. Yet see how easily this rigid man was wound round the finger of a female "teener," as the Americans beautifully express it !

He was sitting very sadly at his big black desk, one mild and melancholy Sabbath eve, with the light of the dull day fading out and failing to make facets from the diamonds of the windows, and the heavy school-clock ticking feebly, as if it wished time was over ; while shadows, that would have frightened any other unmarried man in the parish, came in from the silent population of the old churchyard, as if it were the haze of another world. A little cloud of smoke, to serve them up

with their own sauce, would have consoled the schoolmaster ; but he never allowed any smoking in this temple of the Muses, and as the light waned he lit his tallow candle, to finish the work that he had in hand. This was a work of the highest criticism, to revise, correct, and arrange in order of literary merit all the summaries of the morning sermon prepared by the head-class in the school. Some of these compositions were of extreme obscurity, and some conveyed very strange doctrinal views. He was inclined to award the palm to the following fine epitome, practical, terse, and unimpeachably orthodox : "The sermon was, sir, that all men ort to be good, and never to do no wikked things whenever thay can help it." But while he yet paused, with long quill in hand, the heavy oak door from the inner yard was opened very gently, and a slender form attired in black appeared at the end of the long and gloomy room.

Firm of nerve as he was, the master quailed a little at this unexpected sight ; and therefore it became a very sweet relief when the vision brightened into a living and a friendly damsel, and more than that a very charming one. All firm resolutions like shadows vanished ; instead of a stern and distant air and a very rigid attitude, a smile of delight and a bow of admiration betrayed the condition of his bosom.

The fair and artless Tamar knew exactly how to place herself to the very best advantage. She stood on the further side of the candle, so that its low uncertain light hovered on the soft curve of her cheeks, and came back in a flow of steady lustre from her large brown eyes. She brushed an unbidden tear away, and timidly allowed those eyes to rest upon the man of learning. No longer was she the gay coquette, coying with frolic challenge, but the gentle, pensive, submissive maiden appealing to a loftier mind. The sergeant's tender heart was touched, up sprang his inborn

chivalry, and he swept away with his strong right hand the efforts of juvenile piety and the lessons of Holy Writ.

"Sergeant Schoolmaster, no chair for me," Tamar began in a humble voice, as he offered his own official seat. "I have but a moment to spare, and I fear you will be so angry with me for intruding upon you like this. But I am so—oh, so unhappy!"

"What is it, my dear? Who has dared to vex you? Tell me his name, and although it is Sunday—ah, just let me come across him!"

"Nobody, nobody, Sergeant Schoolmaster!" here she pulled out a handkerchief, which a woman would have pronounced, at a glance, the property of her mistress. "Oh, how shall I dare to tell you who it is!"

"I insist upon knowing," said the sergeant boldly, taking the upper hand because the maiden looked so humble; "I insist upon knowing who it is, this very moment."

"Then if I must tell, if you won't let me off," she answered with a sweet glance, and a sweeter smile, "it is nobody else but Sergeant Jakes himself."

"Me!" exclaimed the veteran; "whatever have I done? You know that I would be the last in all the world to vex you."

"Oh, it is because you are so fierce. And that, of course, is because you are so brave."

"But, my dear, my pretty dear, how could I ever be fierce to you?"

"Yes, you are going to cane my brother Billy in the morning."

This was true beyond all cavil, deeply and beautifully true. The sergeant stared, and frowned a little; justice must allow no dalliance.

"And oh, he has got such chilblains, sir! Two of them broke only yesterday, and will be at their worst in the morning. And he didn't mean it, sir, oh, he never meant it, when he called you an 'old beast'!"

"The discipline of the school must be maintained." Mr. Jakes stroked

his beard, which was one of the only pair then grown in the parish (the other being Dr. Gronow's), for the growth of a beard in those days argued a radical and cantankerous spirit, unless it were that of a military man. Without his beard Mr. Jakes would not have inspired half the needful awe; and he stroked it now with dignity, though the heart beneath it was inditing of an unworthy idea. "Unhappily he did it, miss, in the presence of the other boys. It cannot be looked over."

"Oh, what can I do, Sergeant, what can I do? I'll do anything you tell me, if you'll only let him off."

The schoolmaster gave a glance at all the windows. They were well above the level of the ground outside; no one could peep in without standing on a barrel, or getting another boy to give him a leg up. "Tamar, do you mean what you say?" he inquired, with a glance of mingled tenderness and ferocity,—the tenderness for her, the ferocity for her brother.

"If you have any doubt you have only got to try me. There can't be any harm in that much, can there?" She looked at him, with a sly twinkle in her eyes, as much as to say, "Well, now, come, don't be so bashful."

Upon that temptation this long-tried veteran fell from his loyalty and high position. He approached the too fascinating damsel, took her pretty hand, and whispered something through her lovely curls. Alas, the final word of his conditions of abject surrender was one which rhymed with "this," or "miss," or that which it should have been requited with, a hiss. Oh, Muggridge, Muggridge, where were you? Just stirring a cup of unfriended tea, and meditating on this man's integrity!

"Oh, you are too bad, too bad, Sergeant!" exclaimed the young girl starting back, with both hands lifted and a most becoming blush. "I never did,—I never could have thought that you had any mind for such trifles. Why, what

would all the people say if I were only to mention it?"

"Nobody would believe you," replied Mr. Jakes, to quench that idea, while he trembled at it, adding thereby to his iniquities.

"Well, perhaps they wouldn't. No, I don't believe they would. But everybody likes a bit of fun sometimes; but we won't say another word about it."

"Won't we though? I have got a new cane, Tamar; the finest I ever yet handled for spring; the rarest thing to go round chilblains. Bargain, or no bargain, now?"

"Bargain!" she cried; "but I couldn't do it now. It must be in a more quieter place. Besides, you might cheat me, and cane him after all. Oh, it is too bad, too bad to think of! Perhaps I might try next Sunday."

"But where shall I see you next Sunday, my dear? 'Never put off; it gives time for to scoff.' Give me one now, and I'll stick to it."

"No, Sergeant Jakes. I don't like to tell you, and my father would be so angry. But I don't see what right he has to put me in there. And oh, it is so lonely! And I am looking out for ghosts, and never have a happy mouthful. That old woman will have something to answer for. But it's no good to ask me, Sergeant; because—because ever so many would be after me, if they only got a hint of it."

This of course was meant to stop him; but somehow it had quite the opposite effect, and at last he got out of the innocent girl the whole tale of her Sunday seclusion. The very best handmaid (as everybody knows) will go through the longest and bitterest bout of soaking, shivering, freezing, starving, dragging under wheels, and being blown up to the sky, rather than forego her "Sunday out." Miss Tamar Haddon was entitled always to this Sabbath travail; and such was her courage that have it she would, though it blew great guns, and rained cats and dogs.

Now, her father, as may have been said before, was Walter Haddon of *The Ivy-bush*, as respectable a man as ever lived and very fond of his children. This made him anxious for their welfare, and welfare meaning even then (though not so much as now it does), fair wealth and farewell poverty, Mr. Haddon did his best to please his wealthy aunt, a childless widow who lived at Perlycombe. For this old lady had promised to leave her money among his children if they should fail to offend her. In that matter it was a hundredfold easier to succeed than it was to fail, for her temper was diabolical. Poor Tamar, being of flippant tongue, had already succeeded fatally; and the first question Mrs. Pods always asked, before she got out of her pony-carriage, was worded thus, "Is that minx Tamar in the house?"

Whatever the weather might be, this lady always drove up with her lame pony to the door of *The Ivy-bush* at half-past one of a Sunday, expecting to find a good hot dinner and hot rum and water afterwards. For all this refreshment she never paid a penny, but presented the children with promises of the fine things they might look forward to; and thus, like too many other rich people, she kept all her capital to herself, and contrived to get posthumous interest upon it, on the faith of contingent remainders.

Now Tamar's mother was dead; and her father knowing well that all the young sparks of the village were but as the spoils of her bows and bonnets, had contrived a very clever plan for keeping her clear of that bitter Mrs. Pods, without casting her into the way of yokel youths and spry young bachelors of low degree. At the back of his hostelry stood the old abbey, covered with great festoons of ivy from which the inn probably took its name; the only entrance to the ruins was by the arched gateway at the end of his yard, other approaches having been walled up, and the key of the tall iron gate was kept at this inn for the

benefit of visitors. The walls of the ancient building could scarcely be seen anywhere for the ivy, and the cloisters and roofless rooms inside were over-grown with grass and briars. But one large chamber, at the end of a passage, still retained its vaulted ceiling and stone pavement scarred with age. Perhaps it had been the refectory, for at one side was a deep fireplace where many a hearty log had roared; at present its chief business was to refresh Miss Tamar Haddon. A few sticks kindled in the old fireplace, and a bench from the kitchen of the inn made it a tolerable keeping-room, at least in the hours of daylight; though at night the bold sergeant himself might have lacked the courage for sound slumber there. To this place was the fair Tamar banished, for the sake of the money-bags of Mrs. Pods, from half-past one till three o'clock, on her Sunday visits to *The Ivy-bush*. Hither the fair maid brought her dinner, steaming in a basin hot, and her father's account-book of rough jottings which it was her business to verify and interpret; for, as is the duty of each newer generation, she had attained to higher standard of ennobling scholarship.

In a few words now she gave the loving sergeant a sketch of this time-serving policy and her exile from the paternal dinner-table, which aroused his gallant wrath; and then she told him how she had discovered an entrance unknown to her father, at a spot where a thicket of sycamores, at the back of the ruins, concealed a loop-hole not very difficult to scale. She could make her escape by that way, if she chose, after her father had locked her in, if it were not for spoiling her Sunday frock. And if her father went on so, for the sake of pleasing that ugly old frump, she was blest if she would not try that plan, and sit on the river bank far below, as soon as the spring dried up the rubbish. But if the sergeant thought it worth his while to come and afford her a

little good advice, perhaps he might discover her Sunday hat waving among the ivy. This enamoured veteran accepted tryst with a stout heart but frail conscience. The latter would haply have prevailed, if only the wind had the gift of carrying words which the human being does not utter, but thinks and forms internally. For the sly maid to herself said this, while she hastened to call her big brother Watty to see her safe back to Walderscourt. "What a poor old noodle! As if I cared twopence how much he whacks Billy! Does he think I would ever let him come anigh me, if it wasn't to turn him inside out? Now if it were Low Jarks, his young brother, that would be quite another pair of shoes."

On the following Sunday it was remarked by even the less observant boys that their venerated master was not wearing his usual pair of black Sunday breeches, with purple worsted stockings showing a wiry and muscular pair of legs. Strange to say, instead of those, he had his second-best small-clothes on, with dark brown gaiters to the knee, and a pair of thick laced shoes instead of Sunday pumps with silk rosettes. So wholly unversed in craft, as yet, was this good hero of a hundred fights. Thyatira also marked this change with some alarm and wonder; but little dreamed she in her simple faith of any rival Delilah.

Mr. Penniloe's sermon, that Sunday morning, was of a deeply moving kind. He felt that much was expected of him after his visit to London, where he must have seen the King and Queen, and they might even have set eyes on him. He put his long-sight glasses on, so that he could see anybody that required preaching at; and although he was never a cushion-thumper, he smote home to many a too comfortable bosom. Then he gave them the soft end of the rod to suck, as a conscientious preacher always does, after smiting hip and thigh with a weapon too indigenious. In a word,

it was an admirable sermon, and one even more to be loved than admired, inasmuch as it tended to spread goodwill among men, as a river that has its source in heaven.

Sergeant Jakes, with his stiff stock on, might be preached at for ever without fetching a blink. He sat bolt upright, and every now and then flapped the stump of his left arm against his sound heart, not with any eagerness to drive the lesson home, but in proof of cordial approbation of hits that must tell upon his dear friends round about. One cut especially was meant for Farmer John; and he was angry with that thick-skinned man for staring at another man as if it were for him. And then there was a passage that was certain to come home to his own brother Robert, who began to slaughter largely, and was taking quite money enough to be of interest to the pulpit. But everybody present seemed to Jakes to be applying everything to everybody else,—a disinterested process of the noblest turn of thought.

However those who have much faith (and who can fail to have some!) in the exhortations of good men who practise their own preaching, would have been confirmed in their belief by this man's later conduct. Although the body of the church had been reopened for some weeks now, with the tower-arch finished and the south wall rebuilt, yet there were many parts still incomplete, especially the chancel where the fine stone screen was being erected as a reredos; and this still remained in the builder's hands, with a canvas partition hiding it.

When the congregation had dispersed Mr. Jakes slipped in behind that partition, and stood by a piece of sculpture which he always had admired. In a recess of the northern wall was a kneeling figure in pure white marble of a beautiful maiden claimed by death on the very eve of her wedding-day. She slept in the

Waldron vaults below; while here the calm sweet face, portrayed in substance more durable than ours, spoke through everlasting silence of tenderness, purity, and the more exalted love. The sergeant stood with his hard eyes fixed upon that tranquil countenance. It had struck him more than once that Tamar's face was something like it; and he had come to see whether that were so. He found that he had been partly right, but in more important matters wrong. In profile, general outline, and the rounding of the cheeks, there was a manifest resemblance. But in the expression and quality of the faces, what a difference! Here all was pure, refined and noble, gentle, placid, spiritual. There all was tempting, flashing, tricksome, shallow, earthly, sensuous. He did not think those evil things, for he was not a physiognomist; but still he felt the good ones, and his mind being in the better tone (through commune with the preacher's face, which does more than the words sometimes, when all the heart is in it) the wonted look of firmness, and of defiance of the Devil, returned to his weather-beaten face. The gables of his eyebrows, which had expanded and grown shaky, came back to their proper span and set; he nodded sternly, as if in pursuit of himself with a weapon of chastisement; and his mouth closed as hard as a wrench-hammer does with the last turn of the screw upon it. Then he sneered at himself, and sighed as he passed the empty grave of his colonel; what would that grand old warrior have thought of this desertion to the enemy? But ashamed as he was of his weak surrender and treachery to his colours, his pride and plighted word compelled him to complete his enterprise. The abbey stood near the churchyard wall, but on that side there was no entrance; to get at the opposite face of the buildings, a roundabout way must be taken, and Jakes resolved now that he would not skulk by the lower path

from the corner, but walk boldly across the meadow from the lane that led to Perlycombe. This was a back way with no house upon it, and according to every one's belief here must have lurked that horse and cart on the night of the awful outrage.

Even to a one-handed man there was no great difficulty in entering one of the desolate courts by the loophole from the thicket; and there he met the fair recluse in a manner rather disappointing to her. Not that she cared at all to pursue her light flirtation with him, but that her vanity was shocked when he failed to demand his sweet reward. And he called her "Miss Haddon," and treated her with a respect she did not appreciate. But she led him to her lonely bower, and roused up the fire for him, for the weather was becoming more severe, and she rallied him on his clemency, which had almost amounted to weakness, ever since he allowed her brother Billy to escape.

"Fair is fair, miss," the master answered pensively. "As soon as you begin to let one off, you are bound to miss the rest of them."

"Who have they got to thank for that? I am afraid they will never know," she said with one of her most bewitching smiles, as she came and sat beside him. "Poor little chaps! How can I thank you for giving them such a nice time, Sergeant?"

The veteran wavered for a moment as that comely face came nigh, and the glossy hair she had contrived to loosen fell almost on his shoulders. She had dressed herself in a killing manner, while a lover's knot of mauve-coloured ribbon relieved the dulness of her frock, and enhanced the whiteness of her slender neck. But for all that, the sergeant was not to be killed, and his mind was prepared for the crisis. He glanced around first, not for fear of anybody, but as if he desired witnesses; and then he arose from the bench, and looked at this seductive maiden with eyes that had

a steady sparkle, hard to be discomfited by any storm of flashes. "Tamar," he said, "let us come to the point. I have been a fool, and you know it; you are very young, but somehow you know it. Now have you meant, from first to last, that you would ever think of marrying me?"

It never should have been put like that. Why you must never say a word, nor use your eyes except for reading, nor even look in your looking-glass, if things are taken in that way.

"Oh, Sergeant, how you frighten me! I suppose I am never to smile again. Who ever dreamed of marrying?"

"Well, I did," he answered with a twinkle of his eyes and squaring of his shoulders. "I am not too old for everybody, but I am much too old for you. Do you think I would have come here else? But it is high time to stop this fun."

"I don't call it fun at all," said Tamar, fetching a little sob of fright. "What makes you look so cross at me?"

"I did not mean to look cross, my dear." The sergeant's tender heart was touched. "I should be a brute if I looked cross. It is the way the Lord has made my eyes. Perhaps they would never do for married life."

"That's the way all of them look," said Tamar, "unless they get everything they want. But you didn't look like that last Sunday."

"No; but I ought. Now settle this. Would you ever think of marrying me?"

"No; not on no account. You may be sure of that; not even if you was dipped in diamonds." The spirit of the girl was up, and her true vulgarity came out.

"According to my opinion of you, that would make all the difference," said the sergeant, also firing up. "And now, Miss Haddon, let us say 'good-bye.'"

"Let me come to myself, dear Sergeant Jakes. I never meant to be rude to you; but they do court me so different. Sit down for a minute. It is so lonely, and I have heard such frightful things. Father won't be coming for half an hour yet. And after the way you went on, I am so nervous. How my heart goes pit-a-pat! You brave men cannot understand such things." At this moving appeal, Mr. Jakes returned and endeavoured to allay her terrors. "It is all about those dreadful men," she went on; "I cannot sleep at night for thinking of them. You know all about them. If you could only tell me what you are doing to catch them. They say that you have found out where they went, and are going to put them in jail next week. Is it true? People do tell such stories. But you found it all out by yourself, and you know all the rights of it."

With a little more coaxing and trembling and gasping, she contrived to get out of him all that he knew concerning the matter to the present time. Crang had identified the impressions as the footmarks of the disabled horse; and a search of the cave by torchlight showed that it must have been occupied lately. A large button with a raised rim, such as are used on sailors' overalls, had been found near the entrance, and inside were prints of an enormous boot too big for any man in Perlycross. Also the search had been carried further, and the tracks of a horse and a narrow-wheeled cart could be made out here and there, until a rough flinty lane was come to, leading over the moors to the Honiton road. All these things were known to Dr. Fox, and most of them to Mr. Penniloe who had just returned from London, and the matter was now in skilful hands. But everything must be kept very quiet, or the chance of pursuing the clue might be lost.

Tamar vowed solemnly that she would never tell a word; and away
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went the sergeant, well pleased with himself, as the bells began to ring for the afternoon service.

CHAPTER XXVI.

THE OLD MILL.

COMBING up on the south like a great tidal wave, Hagdon Hill for miles looks down on the beautiful valley of the Perle, and then at the western end breaks down into steep declivities and wooded slopes. Here the Susscot brook has its sources on the southern side of the long gaunt range outside the parish of Perlycross; and gathering strength at every stretch from flinty trough and mossy runnel, is big enough to trundle an old mill-wheel a long while before it gets to Joe Crang's forge.

This mill is situated very sweetly for those who love to be outside the world. It stands at the head of a winding hollow fringed along the crest with golden gorse, wild roses by the thousand, and the silvery gleam of birch. Up this pretty *goyol* (as they call it) there is a fine view of the ancient mill, lonely, decrepit, and melancholy, with the flints dropping out of its scarred wall-face, the tattered thatch rasping against the wind, and the big wheel dribbling idly; for the wooden carrier, that used to keep it splashing and spinning merrily, sprawls away on its trestles, itself a wreck, broken-backed and bulging. And yet in its time this mill has done well, and pounded the corn of a hundred farms; for, strange as it may be, the Perle itself is exceedingly shy of mill-work, being broken upon no wheel save those of the staring and white-washed factory which disfigures the village of Perlycross. Therefore from many miles around came cart, and butt, and van, and wain, to this out-of-the-way and hard to find, but flourishing and useful Tremlett mill. That its glory has departed and its threshold is deserted came to pass through no fault of wheel or water,

or even wanton trade seduced by younger rivals. Man alone was to blame, and he could not (seldom incapable as he is of that) even put the fault on woman.

The Tremletts were of very ancient race, said to be of Norman origin, and this mill had been theirs for generations. Thrifty, respectable, and hard-working, they had worn out many millstones, one of which had been set up in the churchyard, an honour to itself and owner, and patched up a lot of ages of mill-wheels (the only useful revolution) until there came into the small human sluice a thread of vile weed that clogged everything up; a vein of bad blood that tainted all, varicose, sluggish, intractable. What man can explain such things, even to his own satisfaction? Yet everybody knows that it is so, and too often with the people who have been in front of him. Down went the Tremletts for a hundred years (quite a trifle to such an old family) and the wheel ceased to turn, and the hearth had nought to burn, and the brook took to running in a low perverted course.

But even sad things may be beautiful, like the grandest of all human tragedies; and here before Mr. Penniloe's new long-sighted glasses, which already had a fine effect upon his mind, was a new sight, worth all the three sovereigns he had paid, in addition to the three he had lived under. No monarch of the world (let alone this little isle) could have gilded and silvered and pearled and jewelled his most sumptuous palace and his chambers of delight with a tithe of the beauty here set forth by nature, whose adornments come and go at every breath. For there had just been another heavy fall of snow, and the frost having firm hold of the air, the sun had no more power than a great white star, glistening rather than shining, and doubtful of his own dominion in the multitude of sparkles. Everything that stood across the light was clad with dazzling raiment; branch,

and twig, and reed, and ozier, pillowed with lace of snow above and fringed with chenille of rime below. Under and through this arcade of radiance stood the old mill-wheel (for now it could stand) black, and massive, and leaning on pellucid pillars of glistening ice.

Mr. Penniloe lifted up his heart to God, as he always did at any of His glorious works; and then he proceeded to his own less brilliant, but equally chilling duty. Several times he knocked vainly at the rickety door of the remaining room, until at last a harsh voice cried, "Come in, can't 'e? Nort for 'e to steal here." Then he pulled the leather thong, an old boot-lace, and the grimy wooden latch clicked up, and the big door staggered inwards. Everything looked cold and weist and haggard in the long low room he entered, and hunger-stricken, though of solid fabric once and even now tolerably free from dirt. At the further end, and in a gloomy recess, was a large low bedstead of ancient oak, carved very boldly and with finely flowing lines. Upon it lay a very aged woman, of large frame and determined face, wearing a high yellow cap, and propped by three coarse pillows, upon which fell the folds of a French shawl of rich material. She had thick eyebrows, still as black as a coal, and fierce gray eyes with some fire in them still, and a hooked nose that almost overhung a pointed chin, and her long bony arms lay quivering upon a quilt of well-worn patchwork. She looked at Mr. Penniloe, discerning him clearly without the aid of spectacles, and saluted him with a slight disdainful nod. "Oh, Passon, is it? Well, what have 'e got to say to me?" Her voice was hard and pitched rather high, and her gaunt jaws worked with a roll of wrinkles, intended for a playful grin.

"Mrs. Tremlett, I was told that you wished to see me, and that it is a solemn moment with you, that soon you will stand in the presence of a merciful but righteous Judge."

Mr. Penniloe approached her with a kind and gentle look, and offered to

take one of her clenched and withered hands, but she turned the knuckles to him with a sudden twist, and so sharp were they that they almost cut his palm. He drew back a little, and a flash of spiteful triumph told him that she had meant this rasper for him.

"Bain't a gwain' to die yet," she said; "I be only ninety-one, and my own moother wor ninety-five afore her lost a tooth. I reckon I shall see 'e out yet, Master Passon; for 'e don't look very brave, no, that 'e don't. Wants a little drap out o' my bottle, I conzider."

The clergyman feared that there was little to be done; but he never let the Devil get the best of him, and he betook himself to one of his most trustworthy resources. "Mrs. Tremlett, I will, with your permission, offer a few simple words of prayer, not only for you but for myself, my friend. You can repeat the words after me if you feel disposed."

"Stop!" she cried. "Stop!" and threw out both hands with great vigour, as he prepared to kneel. "Why, you han't g'en me the zhillin' yet. You always gives Betty Cork a zhillin' afore 'e begins to pray to her. Bain't my soul worth every penny of what Betty Cork's be?"

The parson was distressed at this inverted view of the value of his ministrations. Nevertheless he pulled out the shilling, which she clapped with great promptitude under her pillow, and then turned her back upon him. "Goo on now, Passon, as long as ever 'e wull; but not too much noise like, case I might drop off to sleep."

Her attitude was not too favourable; but the curate had met with many cases quite as bad, and he never allowed himself to be discouraged. And something perhaps in his simple words, or the powers of his patient humility, gave a better and a softer turn to the old woman's moody mind.

"Passon, be you a honest man?" she inquired, when he had risen, pronouncing the "h" in "honest" very strongly, as is often done in Devon-

shire. "B'lieve 'e be a good man. But be 'e honest?"

"My goodness, as you call it, would be very small indeed unless I were honest, Mrs. Tremlett. Without honesty all is hypocrisy."

"And you bain't no hypocrite, though 'e may be a vule. Most fine scholars is big vules, and half-scholars always maketh start for rogues. But I'll trust 'e, Passon; and the Lord will strike 'e dead, being in his white sleeves, if 'e goo again the truth. What do 'e say to that, Passon Penniloe? What do 'e think now of that there? And thee praying for me, as if I hadn't got ne'er a coffin's worth!" The old lady pulled out a canvas bag, and jingled it against Mr. Penniloe's gray locks. Strong vitality was in her face. How could she die, with all that to live for? "Fifty-two guineas of Jarge the Zecond. T'other come to the throne afore I did it; but his head wasn't out much, and they might goo back of his 'en. So I took 'un of the man as come afore, and there they has been ever since, three score years and ten and two. The Lord knoweth, if He reckon'th up the sparrows, what a fine young woman I were then; there bain't such a one in all the county now; six foot high, twenty inch across the shoulders, and as straight as a hazel wand sucker'd from the root. Have mercy on you, Passon! Your wife, as used to come to see me, was a very purty woman. But in the time of my delight, I could a' taken her with one hand and done—well, chucked her over Horse-shoe."

"What do you mean?" Mr. Penniloe asked, and his quiet eyes bore down the boastful gaze and altered the tone of the old virago.

"Nort, sir, nort; it bain't no use to worrit me. Her tumbled off the clift, and her bruk her purty neck. Her was spying too much after coney's holes, I reckon; but her always waz that tender-hearted. You bain't fit to hold a can'le to her, with all your precious prayers and litanies. But

I'll trust 'e, Passon, for her zake. Vetch thickey old book out o' cubbert." In the cupboard near the fireplace he found an ancient Bible bound in black leather and fortified with silver clasps and corners. "Hold that there book in your right hand, and this here bag in t'other;" the old lady still clave to the bag, as if far more precious than the Bible; "and then you say slowly after me, same as I was to do the prayers, 'I, Passon Penniloe, of Perlycross, Christian Minister, do hereby make oath and swear that I will do with this bag of money as Zipporah Tremlett teltheth me, so help me God Almighty.'"

"Stop, if you please. I will make no such promise until I know all about it," objected Mr. Penniloe, while she glared at him with rising anger, and then nodded as something occurred to her.

"Well, then, I'll tell 'e fust, and no call for prabbles. This money bain't none o' they Tremletts; every farden of theirs is gone long ago, although they had ten times so much as this, even while I can mind of 'un. All this, except for a bit of a sto'un in the lower cornder, and that hath been hundreds of years with the Tremletts, but all the rest cometh from my own father, and none on 'em knoweth a word of it. Wouldn't believe if they did, I reckon. Zippy, that's my granddarter as minds me, her hath orders to hurn for her life and vetch you—night or day, mind,—fust moment the breath be gone out of my body. And every varden of it is for she. You be to take it from this here little nestie, wi'out a word to no one, and keep it zealed up under lock and key till Zippy be eighteen year of age, and then, accordin' to your oath, you putt it into her two hands. If 'e do that, Passon, I'll die a Christian, and you be welcome of me to your churchyard. But if 'e on't do it, then I'll die a hathen, and never go to no churchyard, same as scores and scores of the Tremletts is. Now, do 'e care for the soul of an old

'ooman? Or would 'e sooner her went to the Devil?"

By this alternative the curate felt much pressure put upon his conscience. If there were no other way to save her, he must even dispense with legal form and accept a trust which might, for all he knew, defraud the revenue of legacy duty, and even some honest solicitor of a contribution to his livelihood. But first he must be certain that the scheme was just and rational.

"No fear of robbing nobody. They Tremletts be a shocking lot," she said, with amiable candour. "Just slip the wedge on top of latch, for fear one on 'em should come to see if I be dead; though I reckon this weather it would be too much for either son or darter. Wouldn't 'em hurn if 'em knowed of this? But here I may lie and be worm-eaten. And chillers of my own, my own buys and girls; dree quarters of a score I've had, and not one on 'em come anigh me! Never was a harrier-bird could fly so fast as every one on 'em would to this old bed, if 'em knowed what be in it. No, I be a liar; every one on 'em can't, because the biggest half be gone. Twelve buys there was, and dree wenches of no count. Dree buys was hanged, back in time of Jarge the Third, to Exeter jail for ship-staling, and one to Gibbet-moor for what a' did upon the road. Your on 'em was sent over seas, for running a few bits of goods from France. Two on 'em be working to Whetstone pits, 'cording to their own account, though I reckon they does another sort of job now and again. And as for t'other two, the Lord, or the Devil, knoweth what be come to they. Not one on 'em comes nigh poor old moother, who might a' died years ago 'cep for little Zippy. Though little Zip's father have a' been here now and then; the biggest and the wildest of the dozen I call him, though a' kapeth wonderful out of jail. 'Tis his cheel he comes to see, not his poor old moother. Look 'e 'ere, Passon, all the ins and outs of 'un be set down

rarely in that there book; same as the game with lines and crosses we used to play with a oyster-shell fourscore years ago and more."

On three or four leaves of the ancient Bible, bound in for that purpose, was a pedigree of these Tremletts of the Mill descending from the fourteenth century. Mr. Penniloe looked at it with no small interest. What a pity to find them come to this! The mill itself had been a fall no doubt; but the Whetstone pits were a great descent from that.

"Tremletts has always had one or two fine scholars;" the old woman had a strange theory about this. "Twor all along o' that they come down so. Whenever any man taketh much to books, a' stoppeth up his ears to good advice, and a' heedeth of his headpiece, and robbeth of 's own belly. But there, no matter; I can do a bit myself. Have 'e made up your mind about my poor soul?"

From the toss of her nose, Mr. Penniloe was afraid that she was not much in earnest about that little matter; and in common sense he was loth to get entangled with the nettles and briars of such a queer lot. "I think, Mrs. Tremlett," he said, with a smile containing some light of wavering, "that your wisest plan by far would be to have a short will drawn up, and leave the money——"

"Gi'e me my bag, and go thy ways," she screamed in a fury, though the bag was in her claws. "No churchyard for me, and my soul at thy door, thou white-livered, black-smocked Passon!" Her passion struck into her lungs or throat, and she tore at her scraggy chest to ease the pain and gripe of a violent coughing-fit. Mr. Penniloe supported her massive head, for if it fell back it might never rise again. "A drap out o' bottle!" she gasped at last, pointing to the cupboard where the Bible had been. He propped up her head with a pillow on end, and took from the cupboard a long-necked bottle of the best French brandy and a metal

pannikin. "No watter! No watter!" the old woman shrieked, as he went towards a pitcher that stood by the chimney. "Watter spileth all. No veer! Vill up!"

He gave her the pannikin full, and she tipped it off, like a mouthful of milk, and then sat up and looked at him steadily. "I be no drunkard," she said, "though a man as knoweth nort might vancy it. Never touches that stuff, excep' for physic. I've a seed too much what comes of that. Have a drap, wull 'e? Clane glass over yanner." She seemed annoyed again at his refusal, but presently subsided into a milder vein, as if she were soothed by the mighty draught, instead of becoming excited. "Naden't have troubled 'e, Passon," she said, "but for zending of little Zip away. I'll tell 'e why, now just. Better cheel never lived than little Zip. Her tendeth old grannie night and day, though her getteth a tap on the head now and then. But her mustn't know of this here money, or her father 'd have it out of her in two zeconds. Now 'e see why I won't make no will. Now, will 'e do what I axed of 'e?"

After some hesitation the parson gave his promise. He had heard from his wife about poor little Zip, and how faithful she was to her old grandmother; and he felt that it would be unfair to the child to deprive her of the chance in life this money might procure, while he knew that if he declined the trust, not a penny would she ever see of it. He insisted however upon one precaution, that the owner should sign a memorandum of the gift, and place it with the guineas in the bag, and then hand the whole to him as trustee, completing by delivery the *donatio mortis causæ*. In spite of her sufferings from the ruinous effects of the higher education, Ziporah could sign her name very fairly, and a leaf of her grandchild's copybook served very well for the memorial prepared by Mr. Penniloe.

"Now rouse up the fire there, 'e

must be frore a'most," Mrs. Tremlett said when that was finished, and she had shown him where she concealed the treasure. "One good toorn deserves another, as I've heerd say, though never had much chance of proving it; and I could tell 'e a thing or two 'e might be glad to know, Passon Penniloe, wi'out doing harm to nobody. Fust place then, you mind hearing of the man as gi'ed that doiled zany of a blacksmith such a turn—how long agone was it? I can't say justly; but the' night after Squire Waldron's vunerall."

"To be sure. The big man with the lame horse, at Susscot Ford."

"Well, that man was myson Harvey, little Zip's father. You see the name in big Bible. French name it waz then, spelled different, and with a stroke to the tail, as maight be. Tremlett had a hankering after foreign languages. See 'un all down the page, you can."

"What, Mrs. Tremlett!" exclaimed the parson. "Are you aware what you are doing, informing against your own son, and one of the very few remaining?"

"Zober now, zober! Don't 'e be a vule, Passon. I knows well enough what I be adoing of. Just I wants 'un out of way, till arter I be buried like. I zent his little darter to the pits to-day, to tell 'un as how you knowed of it. That'll mak' 'un cut sticks till I be underground, I reckon!"

As the old woman grinned and nodded at her own sagacity, a horrible idea crossed the mind of Mr. Penniloe. Could she be afraid that her own son would dig up her body and dispose of it? Before he had condemned himself for such a vile suspicion, Mrs. Tremlett seemed to have read his thoughts; for she smiled with bitter glory as if she had caught a pious man yielding to impiety. "No, Harvey bain't no body-snatcher, leastways not as I ever heer'd on; though most volk would say a' was bad enough for anything. All that I wants 'un out of way for is

that he mayn't have the chance to rob his darter. He loveth of the little maid so much as Old Nick 'loweth him; but he could never kape his hands out of this here bag, if 'a zeed 'un. And as for your folk doin' any hurt to 'un, 'twould be more use for 'e to drive nails into a shadow than to lay hold of Harvey when he knoweth you be arter 'un. And even if 'e wor to vind 'un, man alive, it would be a bad job for you, or for zix such men as you be, to come nigh the hands of Harvey Tremlett. Volk about these parts don't know nort of 'un', else they'd have had 'un for the 'rastling long ago. He hath been about a good deal among the gipsies and sailor-folk, and so on; and the Lord knows He mustn't look for too very much of good in 'un."

"We must make allowances, Mrs. Tremlett. We never do justice to our fellow-men in that way." Mr. Penniloe was saying to himself, while he spoke, "and a great deal must be allowed for such bringing-up as yours, ma'am. But have you anything more to tell me about that shocking thing, that is such a sad disgrace to Perlycross?" The parson buttoned up his spencer, as if he still felt that dirty Pack's hits below the belt.

"I could tell 'e a zight of things, if I waz so minded, about what they vules to Perlycross, and you among t'others, be mazed about. I can't make 'un out myself; but I be free to swear you'm a passel of idiots. Tremlett was bad enough; no vamley could be worse a'most; and much older they was than any Waldrons. But none on 'em never was dug up for generations. Wonerful things has come to them, things as would fill books bigger than this Bible, because 'em always wor above the lids of the Ten Commandments. But 'em always had peace, so soon as they was dead, till such time as the Devil could come for 'un, and he don't care for no corpses. They Waldrons is tame, no French blood in 'em; vitted for big pews in church, and big vuneralls; vellers not

laikely to be dug up, when that waz never done to Tremletts. Passon, I could tell 'e such a saight of things, as would make the hair creep round the head of thee. Can't talk no more or my cough will come on. Will tell 'e all about your little boy, Mike, if 'e come again when this vrost is over. And then I'll show 'e Zip. But I can't talk vair, while the houze be so cold. I've a dood too much to-day, for a 'ooman in her ninety-zecnd year. You come again about this day wake. I trust 'e now, Passon; you be a good man, because you'm got no good blood in you. A old 'ooman's blessing won't do 'e no harm."

Vast is the power of a good kind face, and of silence at the proper moment. The curate of *Perlycross* possessed that large and tender nature at which the weak are apt to scoff, because they are not afraid of it. Over them no influence can last, for there is nothing to lay hold of; but a strong-willed person, like that old woman, has substance that can be dealt with, if handled kindly and without pretence. Thus Mr. Penniloe indulged some hope of soothing and softening that fierce and flinty nature, and guiding it towards that peace on earth which is the surest token of the amnesty above.

But while he was at breakfast on the following day he was told that a little maid was at the front door, crying very bitterly and refusing to come in. He went out alone, but not a syllable would she utter until he had closed the door behind him. There she stood, shivering in the snow and sobbing, very poorly dressed, and with nothing on her head, but mopping her eyes and nose, as she turned away, with a handkerchief of the finest lace. "Zip," was all the answer Mr. Penniloe could get to his gentle inquiry as to who she was; and

then she looked at him with large and lustrous eyes, beautifully fringed below as well as above, and announcing very clearly that she was discussing him within. Although he guessed what her errand was, the clergyman could not help smiling at her earnest and undisguised probation of his character; and that smile settled the issue in his favour. "You be to coom to wance," her vowel-sounds were of the purest Devonshire, air winged by many a quill, but never summed in pen by any. "Wi'out no stapping to think, you be to coom!"

"What an imperious little Zenobia!" said Mr. Penniloe, in self-commune.

"Dunno whatt thickey be. Grand-moother zayeth, 'e must coom to wance. But her be dead, zince the can'le goood out." Her eyes burst into another flood, and she gave up the job of sopping it.

"My dear, I will come with you in half a minute. Come and stand in the warmth, till I am ready."

"Noo, noo; I bain't to stop. Putt on hat, and coom raight awai. Vire goood out and can'le goood out, and grannie goood out along wi' 'un."

Mr. Penniloe huddled his spencer on, while the staring child danced with impatience in the snow; and quiet little Fay came and glanced at her, and wondered how such things could be. But Fay would not stare, because she was a little lady.

The clergyman was very quick of foot; but the child with her long Tremlett legs kept easily in front of him all the way, with the cloud of her black hair blowing out on the frosty air to hurry him.

"I bain't aveared of her. Be you?" said the little maid, as she rose on tip-toe to pull the thong of the heavy latch. "If her coom back, her would zay—'Good cheel, Zippy!'"

(To be continued.)

THE EXPEDITION TO THE WEST INDIES.

1655.

THE attack on the islands of St. Domingo and Jamaica in 1655 may be described as the first of our "little wars." It was directed, it is true, against a European power; but none the less, from the scene of action, the strength of the forces engaged, and the general circumstances, it belongs more properly to this category than to any other. By this time we have learned more or less how such enterprises for the conquest of tropical territory should be conducted; but in the days of the Protectorate the experience of such expeditions was not great, and the secret of carrying them to a successful issue, if not unknown, had been forgotten. The West Indian expedition of 1654-5 therefore claims some attention as our first State-directed tropical war; and it deserves possibly even more for that, both from a political and military point of view, it was Cromwell's greatest failure.

It is immaterial here to discuss the motive for Cromwell's attack on the Spanish colonies. The temptation to refill an empty treasury with the wealth of the Indies was certainly strong; and reprisals for Spanish aggression against our West Indian possessions of Tortuga and St. Kitts made a very respectable pretext for yielding to it. He must have determined on the design almost simultaneously with his elevation to the Protectorate; but he carefully kept it secret, dangling the bait of an English alliance before the eyes of France till he drove Mazarin nearly to desperation, and then in turn coquetting with Spain, but revealing his real purpose to no one.

The design indeed was a very great one, nothing less than the expulsion of the Spaniards from the Antilles

and the Main, and the plantation of Englishmen in their stead. "We think," he wrote in October, 1655 (nine months after the departure of the expedition), "and it is much designed among us to strive with the Spaniard for the mastery of all those seas . . . to restrain and suppress the tyrannies and usurpations of the King of Spain in those countries by a pretended donation of the Pope." The source from which he drew the first inspiration for this great scheme may be traced to two men,—to Thomas Gage, a converted Jesuit priest, who knew the Spanish Islands and the Spanish Main well, and had written a book on the subject, and to Colonel Thomas Modyford of Barbados. The former probably hated the Spaniards with all the hatred of a renegade; but the latter had peculiar reasons for trying to ingratiate himself with Cromwell. Barbados, almost the oldest of our colonial possessions, was at this time an extremely thriving little place, and had already sufficiently good opinion of itself to claim to be a "limb of the Commonwealth." The Civil War in England, however, had landed the island in internal troubles. Early in 1650 a conspiracy had been hatched to drive all Independents from Barbados, and at the head of this conspiracy was Colonel Thomas Modyford. The plot was defeated by the indiscretion of one of the conspirators, who discovered it in his cups; but Modyford was certainly implicated, and this was not likely to make him acceptable to the Protector. Shortly after this, Lord Willoughby of Parham, a renegade Parliamentary officer, proclaimed King Charles the Second in Barbados and raised the disorders afresh. This of course was not to be endured by a victorious Parliament;

and a naval expedition under the famous admiral, Sir George Ascue (or Ayscough) was despatched to reduce the island to submission. Again Modyford came to the fore, this time to support the Parliament; and his defection was so serviceable that Ascue was able to effect his task very speedily. It was, beyond all doubt, with the object of ingratiating himself still further with the Protector that Modyford took such interest in Cromwell's projects against Spanish America.

He was able to establish himself as a personage of importance in connection with the expedition. Barbados, from its position to windward (that is, to trade-windward) of all the Antilles, possessed exceptional advantages as a base of operations, being in the first place the nearest point to England, and in the next the best for a *dépôt* from which troops and stores could be distributed to any region of the Spanish West Indies. Indeed, though ships have so long been independent of sails, the prestige of Barbados' strategic advantages was such that only within the past ten years has she ceased to be the headquarters of our forces in the West Indies. Cromwell was alive to these advantages, and Modyford made it his business to supplement them by others. Following the frequent practice of colonists on a visit to the old country (where there is no risk of contradiction from their fellows), he greatly exaggerated the loyalty and devotion of Barbados, and promised every kind of assistance in recruits, arms, and supplies. This type of man being less common in those days than in these, his assurances were accepted without any reserve; and the zeal of Barbados was reckoned as an important contribution towards the success of the scheme.

It was settled then that Barbados should be the base of operations. But another British possession could also be of service, the new England which lay on the other side of the Atlantic. Supplies would be the

great difficulty, and these could be furnished from this English America; and not only supplies, but settlers to occupy the territory wrested from Spain, who should be more or less trained as a military force and capable of self-defence. Thus both sides of the Atlantic were to combine in the attack; and the governors in New England received their instructions accordingly. But even this was not all. While one fleet was to busy itself in the Caribbean Archipelago and on the Main, a second was to cruise off the coast of Spain to intercept both the plate-fleets from the West and reinforcements from the East. Such was the plan, and assuredly the combinations did not lack breadth and boldness. One point only remained for settlement; whether the first attack should be made on the Main or on an island. Gage was for the first, and named the Orinoco as the objective; Modyford was for the second, naming Cuba or Hispaniola (St. Domingo) for choice; these captured, the mainland could be attacked subsequently; and Modyford's counsel prevailed.

Turning back then to the opening of the year 1654, we find Cromwell, just established as Lord Protector, busy with his preparations, pressing sailors, and even soldiers, for the service. Looking behind the scenes into the papers of the Secretary's Office at Whitehall, we find even more activity¹. The British agent at Hamburg was busy sending over ship-loads of timber for masts, and great stores of gunpowder, which latter, being provided by the army-contractors of the period, of course proved to be of inferior quality. Then again there was immense preparation of clothes, these being always an important part of any great enterprise from the Nibelungenlied onwards—clothes for four thousand men, and most of them of cotton, the virtues of flannel in the Tropics being

¹ Thurlce's State Papers, from which most of my information is taken.

still unknown. Next, there was eight months' store of provisions to be gathered and embarked,—biscuit, pork, pease, beef, and stockfish; six months' supply of cheese, "the other two months to be supplied in oil," also flour and raisins to make duff withal. For liquor, there was three months' provision of beer, the other five months to be made up in brandy and arrack. Tucked in at the end of the list, apparently as an afterthought, appears "ten or twelve thousand of soap." Finally, the climate of the West Indies being not of the best repute for healthiness, due thought was taken for medical stores, "emplasters," unguents, pills, powders, electuaries, and so forth, to the amount of £21. 11s. for each hundred men.

The scene of bustle and confusion at Portsmouth, where all these preparations were going forward, must have beggared description. In the first place, the officer in charge was not a naval man, being no other than Colonel Desborough, sometime quartermaster of Cromwell's Ironsides, and now major-general, member of the Council of State, and commissioner of the Admiralty. The task before him, that of equipping and despatching two fleets, one of twenty-five vessels and one of forty, on a distant cruise, would have been formidable even for an expert, particularly as one of the fleets was to carry a small army with it. But, apart from his inexperience, Desborough was embarrassed by want of organisation and discipline among the men chosen for the service, both soldiers and sailors. The impressed sailors were many of them "masterless rogues, vagabonds and unprofitable instruments," gathered from all parts of Great Britain, and naturally prone to disorder, to say the least of it. The soldiers, too, seem to have been what we now call "drafts"; twelve hundred men, for instance, were drawn from the regiments in London, and possibly were not the men that the commanding officers were most sorry to part with. The

rest, some two thousand men or more, seem to have been made up of volunteers, adventurers, tag, rag, and bobtail, good, bad, and indifferent, including Royalists and many other of the discontented then so numerous in England.

The despatch of Blake's fleet of twenty-five vessels to the Mediterranean on October 25th brought some little relief to the unfortunate Desborough; but the confusion was soon made worse by the concentration of the whole of the heterogeneous West Indian force in Portsmouth. The impressed seamen broke out into mutiny, and their wives pursued the Protector in the streets crying out to know whether their husbands were bound. This was a secret of which Desborough himself was ignorant, and Cromwell only answered that the French and Spanish ambassadors would gladly give him a million apiece to know. And this was probably true, for all Europe stood at gaze while these armaments were equipping, France, Spain, Holland and Denmark, each dreading lest they should be turned against herself. But this secrecy, however vital to the success of the expedition, seems to have made every one concerned rather sulky, including Desborough himself.

The mutiny was put down mainly by blandishment on the part of Desborough and of Vice-Admiral Penn, commander designate of the fleet, who now (November, 1654) appeared on the scene at Portsmouth, trying to reduce the "confused business of victualling" to some method, and, as a first step, condemning some bad beer supplied by the contractors. This William Penn (father of the famous William, at this time a boy of eleven) was a man of no more than thirty-four years old, who had seen much service on the coast of Ireland, hunting Prince Rupert in the Mediterranean, and most notably in the great Dutch war just concluded. He had commanded a squadron in the furious engagements of June and

August, 1653, and had personally engaged the great Tromp ship to ship. After Blake he was probably the most distinguished naval officer of the time, with ideas of his own, too, about naval tactics; and he had proved himself a good public servant, though at heart a Royalist. His colleague in command of the land forces was one Robert Venables, a colonel who had gained some distinction in the Irish war and had been very successful in hunting down Tories. He also is said to have had a leaning to the Royalist side.

One would have thought that these two were commanders enough for the expedition, but such was not Cromwell's opinion. Joined with these were certain commissioners: one Mr. Edward Winslow, apparently a merchant, or at any rate a man of business, who had been employed in some recent negotiations with Denmark, and as a kind of commissioner of the Treasury, or Civil Lord of the Admiralty; one Colonel Gregory Butler who had served under Essex, Waller, and Massey in the Civil War till 1646; and the Governor of Barbados, Daniel Searle. The functions of these commissioners will appear in the course of the narrative; but it is to be noted that they were no novelty. There were civil commissioners on the staff of the New Model Army, and also in Scotland (after Dunbar), who seem to have taken in hand the business that remained to be done when the military departments had finished their work, and to have kept a careful eye on the Treasury.

Thus the expedition not only included both branches of the service, but also a civilian and a colonial element in the supreme authority. The first results were seen before it sailed from England. A strenuous effort was made to get the preparations completed and the fleet to sea by Christmas Day. When it came to the point there was still a deficiency of arms and stores, which Venables wished to wait for. He was,

however, over-ruled by Desborough, who promised that the missing articles should be sent to Barbados after him. Either for this reason or for some other, Venables and Penn quarrelled, and though the sore was patched up for the moment, it needed little irritation to break out again. However, on Christmas Day the two commanders embarked on board the *Swiftsure* flagship, and the fleet weighed anchor. Lady Penn returned to London; but Mrs. Venables accompanied her husband, a small point which is not chronicled without intention. Mr. Winslow also took a passage in the flagship, and watched the general and the admiral during the voyage, noting with satisfaction that "their demeanour mutually to each other at sea was very sweet and hopeful, though the latter gentleman [Penn] is too apt to be taken with such conceits," as had brought about the previous quarrel.

Penn's fleet arrived in Carlisle Bay, Barbados, on the 29th of January, but one day later than Dakin's squadron which had sailed from England five days before it. The voyage is admitted on all hands to have been an unusually fair one, and it is therefore not a little surprising to learn that as many as twenty men died on the passage; but as the loss is described as "not more than twenty men" we may assume that the mortality was not heavy as things went. Arrived at the island the force was soon disembarked, and the time was now come to see how Modyford's promise would be fulfilled. There is no lack of letters from officers of the expedition, the best of which is from Mr. Isaac Birkenhead, scout-master (chief of the Intelligence Department) to Secretary Thurloe. He took, as will be seen from the following extracts, an optimistic view.

BARBADOS, 17th February, 1655.

No sooner did we land, but our General with the rest of the Commanders fell hot to work sparing no pains or service, but forthwith took pains for the quartering of

our soldiers, and raising our men [the promised recruits] wherein they are very well entertained : though some of the planters being of malignant spirits (as indeed most of them are) signify their follies by venting calumnious words against not only the design, but the powers by which we are come [the Protector's authority]. For which the like words one Evans an Islander was adjudged [after a long squabble about jurisdiction] to stand in the pillory next market day, and six months' imprisonment after. . . . On Tuesday, Feb. 6, our General and Commissioner went aboard General (Admiral) Penn ; and there made instructions for one of our Commissioners, Captain Gregory Butler . . . to go to St. Christopher's and to raise men there. And that night being fitted with instructions they set sail. . . . On Friday, Feb. 9, we kept a solemn day of humiliation and next day fell to business, every one in his own sphere. We found the Islanders [recruits] to come in something cheerfully, such as were free men but not of mean estates ; but the rich planters endeavour all they can to dishearten men from going. Yet for lack of our ships [the belated store-ships] with arms, ammunition, and other necessities we are somewhat disheartened, the Islanders either concealing what they have, or not being able to afford a quarter of the arms for our men : and we came so badly armed from England that we often (and I am sure I speak within compass) are not armed with such as Englishmen used to fight with. . . . Nevertheless our officers and soldiers are highly bent upon action, and wish to be gone with such arms as they have ; our General's care being so much that he hath provided great numbers of half-pikes, though at a greater length than ordinary, for they are ten foot long. Many of them (which may cause your wonder) are made of cabbage stalks, I mean of the trees in Barbados which bear cabbages [cabbage-palms], and this for lack of better wood. They are not all handsome, nor will they long be serviceable, but such as our necessities will admit to furnish us with. There is not any faction at all among us ; every one hitherto shewing himself a faithful soldier and a true Englishman. But we have lately found the devil's endeavours to have his chapel among us, which we shall tear up by the roots ; for I have made discovery of certain papists in our army, to the number of 150, which came out of England. We have likewise in our army (as I am credibly informed) Anabaptists. . . . and especially one Cap-

tain Newbury of the *Portland* frigate who denies the Trinity ; who are so violent in prosecuting their way of worship that they come on shore and make proselytes, and get so many of their own sort in the army as they can. . . . As for our regiments, they are exercised regimentally two days in the week ; except Colonel Morris his regiment. . . . Colonel Morris himself is not very cheerful in this design, and the reason I know not, unless he be over-treated by his wife, who hath (as their *way is*) been very importunate with him to leave the voyage. . . . the gentleman [Morris] is very well approved of, and questionless very fit for this design, and very faithful to our interest, but how far his wife may prevail with him. . . . I shall not say, though she be observed to be very powerful and young. In Colonel (Gregory) Butler's regiment there have been divers quarrels among the officers, though taken up by the Colonel. . . . Indeed, the gentleman [Butler] is stout and loves applause and flattery ; and if there be any person who would seem to derelish our proceedings, something he hath to say on their behalf. And all the reason I could ever find—he judgeth himself the elder Colonel. . . . May it please your Honour, your honour's in all humility and faithfulness devoted.

I. B.

Reading between the lines of this letter it is easy, notwithstanding the writer's hopefulness, to see that the expedition was already in a bad plight. And this is rendered still more plain from other sources. Barbados disliked the whole project, and naturally enough, for the planters did not want to have their labourers taken away and their profits reduced. Of the men on whom Cromwell had counted, Daniel Searle, governor and commissioner, did not by any means display the loyalty and zeal expected from him, which Colonel Modyford became extremely unpopular in the island for his share in the expedition. Colonel Morris, another Barbadian by whose good offices great store had been set, behaved as we have seen in the scout-master's letter, and when pressed by Winslow and the other commissioners shuffled out of his obligations in rather

¹ *Hiatus* in *Thurloe* ; words in *Italics* a conjectural emendation.

a remarkable fashion. "He told us in plain terms that if we would give 100,000 weight of sugar, so that he might pay his debts and leave his estate clear to his wife, then Lewis Morris would spend his blood for us. The truth is he prizeth himself at so high a rate as if the expedition could not go on without him, which made some of us in a loving way tell him that we should be glad of so experienced an instrument as he was; but withal let him know our trust and reliance was not on him but in God: and so stands the case between him and us." Behind the whole of which little scene we can descry the figure of Mrs. Morris, "very powerful and young." We may be sure that after this Morris took little trouble to reconcile the planters to the expedition. So refractory and stubborn were they that Venables lost patience and called them "a company of geese," which did little to mend matters.

But not content with quarrelling with the colonists, the commissioners were at variance among themselves. Penn and Venables were always a little distant, and Winslow was inclined to take the side of Venables. Butler seems to have inclined to Penn, but carried little weight with either side. Winslow himself acted as a kind of spy over the rest and was probably disliked by all. Daniel Searle too, as a Barbadian, with his own private profit to look to, of course opposed his colleagues tooth and nail. Never was a stranger directorate at the head of a great enterprise.

Never too, we may add, was there a stranger army sent on any expedition. What with Papists who could not be expected to fight very zealously to upset the decree of the Pope, Anabaptists who had troubled the Parliamentary army with mutiny and insubordination from the first, Socinians, Levellers, and nondescripts, all trying to make proselytes and bitterly divided against each other, the state of this army in the camp at Barbados must have been indescribable. There were

troubles too with the fleet. Some of the ships had no chaplains, and their crews under pretext of going ashore to hear the gospel preached, were found wasting their time in less godly occupations—a strictly human proceeding which enlists our sympathy, but no doubt was highly improper. Nor were the officers much better than the men. Besides that scandalous Captain Newbury who denied the Trinity, there was another, Captain Saunders of the *Dover*, who, having been placed in charge of some Dutch prizes captured in Carlisle Bay, proceeded to loot the cargo for his own profit. Whereupon his men (we learn from one of Penn's general orders), not slow to follow his example, "committed many unhandsome and unwarrantable acts in these ships by breaking open the men's chests, plundering and carrying away divers sorts of goods, and tearing the shirts off the men's backs, to the great scandal and dishonour of the fleet."

One thing only kept these motley and disorderly forces together, the lust of gold; they were all filled with the legendary tales of the wealth of the Indies, and hungered after a share of it. After long waiting for the missing store-ships the commissioners decided at last to get to work, if with no better arms than their pikes made of palm branches. Venables' commission gave him liberty to attack the Spanish possessions in any part of America; but Hispaniola was the original destination of the expedition, and against Hispaniola they decided to sail. So on Saturday, March 31st, they took on board their newly raised forces (including a negro regiment and a regiment of seamen), which brought the total to some six or seven thousand men, and weighed anchor. Following the chain of the Windward Islands, they steered northward till they came to St. Kitts, where they picked up Colonel Gregory Butler and a newly raised regiment of colonists, a thousand strong, and the ships with him; thence westward past Santa Cruz (an English

island, where the colonists "some six years past were all slain most barbarously by the Spaniards"), and at last, on Wednesday, April 11th, they were abreast of Hispaniola.

Little more than a century and a half had passed since Columbus discovered this beautiful island; but the Spaniard had long since done his work. There were said to be three million aboriginal Indians in the island in 1492;¹ in fifty years there were three hundred; by 1617 there were none. In 1655 there were some twenty thousand negroes and two thousand Spaniards, and St. Domingo, founded in 1498, was counted the capital of the West Indies. The English had been to St. Domingo before. Less than a century back (on New Year's Day, 1586) Drake had taken the town, held it for a month, and exacted £50,000 for its ransom, besides stripping it of all its treasure. This was how Francis Drake had handled St. Domingo with twelve hundred men; we have now to see what Penn and Venables did with their eight or nine thousand. The best account (selected from a large number) of their operations is to be found in a letter written by Mr. J. Daniell, auditor-general of the army, to Secretary Thurloe, from which I shall make frequent extracts.

"Wednesday and Thursday (11th and 12th April) we hovered off Hispaniola in counsel; and concluded the certain possession thereof without blows, sharing the living lion's skin with such assurance as I verily believe much displeased our gracious God that hitherto brought us safe. And² [we were disheartened] by Commissioner Winslow's always irresistible affirmative ordering death for any soldier to plunder or diminish the least value

... Our regiment of seamen joined with us our best counsels to run into the town and harbour of St. Domingo suddenly, before knowledge of our approach. This had certainly carried our business; but Mr. Winslow fearing any to have spoil save himself, pretending to claim all for public treasure, would not suffer it." Poor Winslow probably only did his duty about the matter of plunder; but the result of all this counsel was that the fleet did not even get in sight of the town till Friday 13th, when they found it to be "at the bottom of a bay seemingly eight or ten leagues over from point to point; the shore all along to it appearing low and very even, without hills but rocky, and a great surf of the sea against it."

At 2 p.m. on that Friday Venables with three thousand five hundred men and three days' provision sailed off to a landing-place ten leagues to the west of the town, being unable to discover a nearer point for disembarkation.³ The rest of the fleet meanwhile hovered about "to amuse the enemy." On the next day Venables disembarked his whole force, and then, and not till then, promulgated the order prohibiting plunder. Whereupon "the sea-regiment no sooner heard proclaimed 'no plunder' but they laid down their arms; and so likewise most of the army by the example. And though much sweetness was used by the General and officers, no cordials could mitigate that poison." Yet, "seemingly cheerful," they marched off on their way into the bush, where for the present we must leave them.

Meanwhile there was another regiment and a half not yet disembarked. These, probably from the reminiscence of Drake's successful attack, it was designed to land to windward of the

¹ So says Purchas, following Las Casas. The number should perhaps be divided by ten.

² The letter is hastily written and chaotic in construction, so that emendations are essential. The postscript runs, "You pardon errors and pick out the sense, having not time to examine it."

³ According to another account he overshoot his true landing-place, "Drake's Landing," and could not beat back to it; but this was kept quiet at the time. Ogilby's *Hist. of America*, sub voce Hispaniola.

town, so as to approach it from the east while Venables advanced from the west. This plan, however, had to be abandoned for want of a pilot; and accordingly these fifteen hundred men, under a Colonel Buller, were sent to a point called "Drake's Landing," on the river Hayna, which there runs into the sea, to leeward of the town but only ten miles from it. Buller accordingly sailed thither on Saturday, the day of Venables' disembarkation, but on Sunday returned again, "not holding it fit to land at that time in regard to a strong party of the enemy, horse and foot, that appeared and were casting up a breast-work against them." He was peremptorily ordered to go back, force a landing and effect a juncture with Venables, who by that time (there is a delightful vagueness about these combinations) "might be expected to have reached the river." Buller therefore landed on the next day (Monday) and captured the breast-work without difficulty, the Spaniards retiring almost immediately and leaving two guns behind them. Elated with this small success, Buller seems to have been fired with the idea of taking the town by himself before the General came. Neglecting his orders to join with Venables, who was on the other side of the river, he pushed on without waiting through the jungle paths towards the town; but being misled by a treacherous Irish guide, he finally blundered, fortunately without mishap, on to an open place within three miles of the town, and close to a strong fort known as Fort Jeronymo. Here perforce he halted for the night, though out of reach of water.

No sooner was Buller gone "past call or view" from Drake's Landing, when up came Venables and his force to that point, but on the wrong side of the river. He had had a terrible march of thirty long miles or more in the past forty-eight hours. The water-bottles (how like the English of all centuries!) had been left behind

in the belated store-ships; and the men, oppressed with the tropical heat, had to haul their two guns as well as themselves through the jungle paths. "Both officers and soldiers," wrote Venables, "what through want of water, what through the excessive heat of the climate (which was the more intolerable by reason that our march lay all the way through close tall woods that kept all manner of breeze from us) and what through eating of oranges or other fruits by the way, were most of them so far spent and tired that they could hardly stand upon their legs, being for the most part troubled with violent fluxes; hundreds of our men having dropped down by the way, some sick and some dead, so that we lost no inconsiderable number on that march." Needless to say there were no waggons or baggage animals, so that there was no chance for men who fell out but the horses of a small troop of cavalry, sixty strong, that Venables had with him, which of course were insufficient for the work. Having no guide to show him a ford and therefore no hope of joining Buller, Venables marched up the river and bivouacked for the night in an open savannah, at a point seven miles from Buller's position.

Next morning (Tuesday) he was able to cross the river and effect his junction with Buller; and the force to use his own words, "made a shift, though heartless and spiritless, to creep (for so it must be justly styled) within a mile of the Fort Jeronymo." Here, to his joy, he met his missing guide, one Captain Cox. The army crept on, Venables himself advancing almost alone in front of the "forlorn [advanced guard] with a musket on his shoulder," to reconnoitre. Suddenly the enemy dashed out from an ambuscade on the flank and front of the main body, cutting the General and his party completely off from them. The musket on his shoulder saved Venables from serious notice, so that he was able to rejoin his troops through the jungle. The army, after

the first surprise was over, behaved better than might have been expected in the circumstances. "Being enraged it beat back the enemy and took his ground," says Daniell, "and had not extremity of thirst, hunger, weariness, and night resisted, it would that night have entered the town. But necessity has no law; all impatiently cried 'Water,' and many fainted; which regretfully caused a retreat at 10 at night." Retreat the army accordingly did to Drake's Landing, the nearest place where it could be sure of finding water; for as fate willed it, Cox, the guide, who alone knew where water could elsewhere be found, had been killed by the first volley. Seven officers and twenty-three men killed in action were the casualties in the fight; the losses by sickness on the march were probably ten times as great.

On the next day, Wednesday, April 18th, the troops reached Drake's Landing, and "there refreshed its weary spirits and fainting limbs with consultation." Counsel and consultation, as we have seen, consumed a good deal of time in this expedition. Venables, who was himself suffering from dysentery, went on board the flagship, and spent his time wrangling with Penn and Winslow; cruising backwards between the ship and the shore, but apparently always accompanied by Mrs. Venables and always sleeping on board. I have been unable to discover anything about this poor lady (except that she was of more than ordinary bulk) who seems to have done no more than any loyal wife would for a sick and much abused husband; but there can be no doubt that her presence was much resented. The army of course was dissatisfied with the absence of the General. It was badly off in every respect, "feeding on the saltiest beef, unwatered, withal the mouldy brown biscuit, no brandy or comfortable liquor allowed us. All these things caused immoderate desire of water, which that river [Hayna], coming from a copper mine, served

rather to increase, than to quench thirst. And the rains nightly pouring so soaked our bodies with flux, none escaping that violence, that our refreshment proved a weakening instead of a support." And all this hardship, which a little helpfulness might have greatly alleviated, was shirked by the General, sleeping dry and comfortable in his berth on board the flagship. Small wonder that the army cursed Mrs. Venables and gave full rein to the tongue of scandal. "God sanctify these sad dispensations of providence to His Highness and your honour," wrote Butler to Thurloe, two months later, "to grant you that wisdom which may cheer your heart under his will, and direct you never to let a General's wife accompany him on foreign service."

This curious refreshment of the army lasted about a week. On Tuesday, April 24th, it marched once more, by the route of its former retreat, for Fort Jeronimo, bivouacked that night in the jungle, and continued the advance next morning. The advanced guard, five hundred strong, was made up of men drawn in proportion from all the regiments, the old mistake repeated in our day at Majuba and in the Soudan. It was placed under command of Adjutant-General Jackson, who had strict orders to keep "wings" (flanking-parties) in the jungle on each side to prevent a repetition of the ambushade tactics which had cost the army so dear in the previous week. These orders he disobeyed,

I doubt treacherously [says Mr. Daniell], and cowardly neglecting the duty of his place put Captain Butler¹ (a stout, but inexperienced soldier for such a design) to lead the Forlorn, who innocently fell into the enemy's ambushade; but most bravely behaving himself fought it to the death, bringing up his men very orderly till slain. So did Captain Powlet of the Firelocks fight to the death; whom Jackson seeing fall, instead of relief, faced about and most basely ran away. Thereupon immediately the whole Forlorn, like a torrent in a narrow passage

¹ Gregory's brother.

strained, or a sudden and furious wave in a rough sea, nay indeed lightning—the whole Forlorn tumbled into the Reformade [the support]; they all as suddenly into the horse¹—and all mixed like a mass in so narrow a pass not able to contain six abreast (the close thick woods encompassing the side where the enemy was lodged to flank us). And the great fort guns loaded with small shot, bits of iron, broken pistol barrels and all such mischief, had full power and sure aim all along that narrow pass; which so routed all them [forlorn, reformade and horse] that they in the same moment, routed the General's regiment. Never was anything so wedged as we, which made the enemy weary of killing; and had not the rear part of Major General Haynes' regiment drawn into the wood, and so counter-flanked, beating back the enemy to the fort, regaining all the ground, bodies and ambuscades even under and beside the very fort (which ground was maintained all night) our whole army had been in that sudden motion disordered and confused. Jackson sneaked into the bushes like an old fox and saved himself. Our most gallant, noble and valiant General Haynes, with whom and near his person (by his own great desire) I was all this time, was slain—lanced through the body.

Never did British troops behave more disgracefully. The whole Spanish force, at the highest estimate did not exceed two hundred men, and it routed twenty times that number of English. The casualties were one major-general, one colonel, one major, four captains, many lieutenants and ensigns, and between two and three hundred men killed. Nine colours (ensigns or company-colours) were lost; and the whole force was hopelessly demoralized.

As a set off against the behaviour of Jackson it is worth while to record the death of Major-General Haynes, as taken from another source.

A big fellow issued against him [Haynes] from the fort on horseback, and having heard him call for some of his cheery boys to stand by him and beat them back, he said, "What make you here for you English dogs? I'll teach you to lead men."

"Welcome, brave fellow," quoth the General; and with nothing but a small walking-sword in his hand (being come up to the head of the army to give orders and having left his man and his armour at the head of his regiment) encountered him. And the adversary, seeing he could no good [sic] rode a little into the wood and brought out eight with him, lancers. And Thomas Boys with an ensign [colour] and one more who was only left alive, but much wounded, stood by the Major-General and fell with him. Boys, when he was so wounded that he perceived he was slain, stripped off his colours [from the staff] and wrapping himself in them fell and died.²

That night the army lay on its ground amid the dying and the dead, and early next morning, having buried its guns, retreated once more to Drake's Landing. The next four days the commissioners consumed in wrangling; Venables, as before, plying to and fro from ship to shore, and "every return creating new counsel." "Meanwhile," continues Mr. Daniell, "the rains increasing, our men weakening, all even to death fluxing, and these miseries increasing, our Council resolved by seeking God to purge the army." As the result of this search, "First Jackson, found guilty of cowardice, had his sword broken over his head for a coward, his commission revoked, was expelled the Army, and [degraded] to be swabber to hospital-ships of sick people; which was accordingly done. Some women found in men's apparel were punished; and all suspected [females, let us say, for here Mr. Daniell becomes scandalous], Barbados and those plantations yielding little else, narrowly sought after. One soldier proved to have run away was hanged," and so forth. Evidently the army could do with a little purging.

Very soon it became apparent, however, that no more work could be expected from the land forces, purged or unpurged, at any rate in Hispaniola. In vain Penn offered to batter down Fort Jeronymo in four hours; to clear the way to the gates of the town with

¹ The construction breaks down hopelessly, but the sense is clear. The original has not one full stop.

² Penn's *Life of Sir W. Penn.*

his guns; to land men on the quay,—in a word, to do anything rather than abandon the enterprise with disgrace. Venables, weakened by dysentery and failure, and Winslow, hopelessly frightened and discouraged, would hear of nothing but departure for Jamaica. Penn was naturally much annoyed; for had he had his own way he could almost certainly have captured the town without difficulty; and, the fleet as naturally taking his part, there ensued that violent jealousy between the two services which has wrecked so many British expeditions in all parts of the world. Rear-Admiral Dakins, for instance, “did most furiously and unchristianlike say before good witness, ‘Where are the cowardly Spaniards now? Will they not come and cut off these Army rogues that we may be no more troubled with them?’ And his own lieutenant, my former acquaintance, being by accident aboard the ship where I [Daniell] came into, weak and so ill that I was not able to stand, after salutes and discourse told me to my face (like to his profession) that [he would] we were all overboard that they might be rid of us again; speaking the very same words to Captain Fincher in his extremity of weakness, and also to others.”

It was with such feelings towards the sister service that the fleet took what was left of the army on board once more, on Sunday, May 6th, and sailed away with it westward. Monday the 7th was kept as a fast-day. That morning Commissioner Winslow sickened, and by sunset he was dead, chiefly of a broken heart. On the next day “he was put into a coffin and heaved into the sea, and had the solemnity of forty pieces of Ordnance,” if that were any consolation to his indignant shade. On Thursday, May 10th, the fleet entered the harbour of St. Jago de la Vega in Jamaica, Penn leading the way in his own ship, for he had been heard privately to say “that he would not trust the Army with any attempt if he could get near with his ships.” To make quite sure,

he shifted into the *Martin* galley, and ran in till she was aground abreast of a Spanish fort at the head of the harbour—aground, but underneath the fort guns and safe from their fire. Other boats followed with troops, which had no sooner landed than the Spaniards fled, abandoning the fort and thirteen guns with it. So far, so good; but now came a curious scene. “The Army did not follow the enemy, but did draw up in battle [array] and there resolved to stay until their General came ashore to them; for some were much troubled that he did not land with them. For all the time that the army was landing, he was walking about the *Martin* with his hat over his eyes, looking as if he had been studying of physic more than like the General of an Army. And when the Army did come by us [us of the *Martin*] in the boats, they did shout forth into a halloo, which is a custom at sea, throwing up their caps and hats. But General Venables did not give them so much as one look to encourage them, but pulled his hat over his eyes, and did look the other way.”¹

Eventually, however, Venables did go ashore, and next morning occupied the town. Then the three surviving commissioners had another wrangle as to the terms of the capitulation; which resulted in granting permission to the Spaniards to march away with their wives and families. Gregory Butler, who had quarrelled with Venables from the first, now seized the opportunity to have high words with Penn for not making the terms harder. Well was it for poor Winslow that he was comfortably sunk in a thousand fathoms of water! Then came the question, what should be done next? Provisions were running short, and none could be obtained from the Spaniards who had fled to the mountains. The two belated store-ships, months overdue, did indeed

¹ Quoted in Penn's *Memoirs of Sir W. Penn*; the writer probably being Penn's secretary.

arrive on the 19th of May; but this only made matters worse, for they were claimed, characteristically enough, by the admiral as naval stores. Penn did indeed allow Venables as a favour to have some biscuit for the army; but the incident of course increased the friction between the two commanders, and still more between the rival services. The usual results followed. "Yesterday," wrote Penn to Venables on the 22nd of May, "some of the seamen were very unhandsomely treated by the soldiers of the guard at the landing-place, some of whom (as I am informed by persons of credit) were so rudely handled and abused that it is a doubt whether they will recover; and only because they could not carry some persons on board the ship at the same time when they were employed in carrying officers and soldiers with their goods on shore; the commander of the said guard gently permitting the said abuse to be committed."

In reading this early account of the perennial strife between the red coats¹ and the blue jackets, one is inclined to ask, as Thackeray does in recording one of Stella's bitter epigrams on Vanessa, "Would you have it otherwise?" Often as the rivalry has proved disastrous, from this expedition of 1655 to the abortive attack on Carthage in 1740 and to the story of Nelson at Corsica, there it still remains, dormant perhaps, but asking little to rouse it to life. At St. Jago in 1655 we may be sure that reprisals followed every act of violence, and that the taunts exchanged were as bitter as any of those which now suffice to set some of our regiments at each other's throats. Such a state of things could not last long; and eventually it was decided that a part of the fleet, all in fact but nineteen ships, should go home and Penn with it. Home accordingly Penn went, though not till the 25th of June.

¹ It is not quite certain, however, whether this army wore scarlet, though the colour had been common since 1645.

Meanwhile, the army, thinking that the Protector might just as well hear both sides of the question, held a council of war, whereat was passed the following curious resolution:

Resolved, that we are willing, if the General pleases to take the trouble upon him of going to England to represent the condition of this army and this Island, and to procure such relief and supplies as are needful for the carrying on of this design, that he dispose himself for the journey as soon as he shall think convenient. Signed. Rich. Fortescue (Colonel); Ric. Holdipp (Colonel); Samuel Barry (Lieut.-Col.); Isaac Birkenhead (A. G.); Jo. Rudyerd (Q. M. G.).

It is a little difficult to discover whether this polite offer of leave of absence was obtained by Venables to excuse his departure, or put forward as a gentle hint from the officers to hasten it. He was, it is true, desperately ill; so ill that Penn before his departure gave Fortescue a dormant commission to succeed him "in case it should please God to take him away." But his commission vested in him the supreme command of the land-forces, so it is not quite clear why he should have asked leave of absence from his subordinates. Certain it is that he did go home, on the 14th of July; whereupon Colonel Gregory Butler took the opportunity to go home also "alleging that there was no more service for him in regard the rest of the Commissioners were gone." Nor do these commissioners appear to have been missed. The principal officers remaining promptly met and drew up an instrument appointing themselves a Council of Government for Jamaica, the preamble pointing out rather naively that the step was necessary owing to the departure of the original council "for reasons and motives best known to themselves." The new chiefs of the army and navy were Colonel Fortescue and Vice-Admiral Goodson: the latter a good old-fashioned officer who knew his business and could do it; the former an old "New Model" colonel, who

had seen plenty of active service, and now evidently looked with pleasure upon the withdrawal of a lot of useless men, such as the adventurers and volunteers who had joined the expedition. "Many there are," he writes to a friend, "who came out with us vaunting as if they would have carried the Indies, big with expectation of gold and silver ready told up in bags. Not finding that, but meeting with some difficulties and hardships, wherewith God uses to try and exercise His people, they fret, fume, and grow impatient, and wish they were at their onions, &c. Several of such according to their desires and discontent we have dismissed; and they may return with shame enough. . . . General Penn returned fourteen days since for England. I suppose the Protector will not be well pleased to see them."

Colonel Fortescue was right. The Protector was not well pleased with the return of the two commanders. Penn arrived on the 1st and Venables on the 9th of September, and on the 20th both were committed to the Tower. For the Protector was not a man to be trifled with, and he had the success of his great venture very much at heart. "It is certain," wrote the Spanish ambassador to his master, "that the day after the arrival of the fleet the Protector shut himself up, and would see no one till night, subjecting himself to a strict fast to make the news from the fleet the more favourable." The news of the disgraceful failure afflicted him deeply; and not the less so because he had already despatched a reinforcement of one thousand men, which arrived at Barbados the very day on which Penn anchored at Spithead. A little more patience might therefore have saved at least the country's honour. Nevertheless he released both the prisoners after a confinement of one month only. After all, he himself was chiefly to blame for having entrusted the conduct of the enterprise to such men; and nothing

is more extraordinary than that he should have been so much at fault in his selection, for if there was one gift which Cromwell was admitted by all to possess it was that of choosing good instruments.

Meanwhile, he had at least taken Jamaica and was resolved to make the most of it. Measures were at once taken for raising and despatching reinforcements; and Cromwell himself wrote letters of encouragement and commendation to Fortescue and Goodson. The rest of the story is soon told, so far as ink and paper can tell it. The history of the British in the West Indies, as in all our tropical possessions, cannot be read aright without a visit to the old military cemeteries. There, as for instance on the Morne Fortunée at St. Lucia, the traveller, tearing his way through a wilderness of thorns and briars and rank herbage, may stumble against a row of mouldering stones, and decipher that under these stones lie, almost as on parade, colonel, major, captains, lieutenants, ensigns, sergeants, corporals, rank and file, practically a whole regiment killed by the climate. In 1655 it is pitiful to see how innocently they fought against it. "Jamaica," wrote Fortescue, July 15th, 1655, "is a very fruitful and pleasant land, a fit receptacle for honest men, which is our greatest need here." In October Major Sedgwick arrived with reinforcements one thousand strong, and had hardly settled down to business with his colleagues when "the Lord visited Major-General Fortescue with sickness and in four or five days snatched him away." Gage, the ex-Jesuit, Cromwell's adviser, soon followed Fortescue. As to the rest of the force, Sedgwick himself shall tell us.

The condition of the Army is very sad and sickly; and unless God in mercy stay His hand we shall all perish, and be as water spilt upon the grass that cannot be gathered up again. We caused lately a muster to be made both of quality and quantity of the soldiers. The greatest

part of them are sick and those set down well are pitifully well. We landed 831 in Colonel Humphrey's regiment, lusty healthful gallant men who encouraged the whole army. There are at this day [one month from landing] 50 of them dead, whereof two Captains, a Lieutenant, and two ensigns; the Colonel very weak, the Lieut.-Colonel at death's door; I think all the Captains sick; not above four commission-officers in that regiment now fit to march; and the men most part of them sick. Colonel Doyley is fallen sick again, and Colonel Carter is very weak, as also divers other field officers. Soldiers die daily, I believe 140 [? 14] every week and so have done ever since I came hither. It is strange to see young lusty men to appearance well, and in three or four days in the grave.

This is but one specimen of many such letters written from Jamaica in the following two years; a volume might be made of them, all telling the same tale. Men and stores, from the old world and the new, were hurried across the Atlantic to support the new colony. The stores rotted on the beach; and the men looked in each others' haggard faces, helpless as starving field-fares, or watched the fire-flies glancing over their heads and the land-crabs crawling at their feet as the sultry darkness gave place to the burning sunshine, and the deadly, clamorous tropic night to the deadly, silent tropic day. Sedgwick, the new commander, was unnerved with what he saw and begged to come home but was "not very solicitous; sometimes thinking another place will be my portion before I hear again from your Highness." He lived to receive another letter from Cromwell, and died a few weeks later, May 24th, 1656. His

secretary, who had nursed him, survived him four months. In December, 1656, arrived a new commander, Colonel Brayne, a distinguished officer, with further reinforcements. Within three months a third of his men were dead; and he himself after continual sickness lasted but seven months longer. Then Colonel Doyley, seemingly a rough but able and energetic man, who had come out with Venables, took command in virtue of survival. Being the first commander who was unencumbered with commissioners he had a free hand, and began to reduce things to something like order; and he was rewarded by bringing the last act of this grim drama to a successful close. For on May 8th, 1658, the Spaniards attempted to recapture the island, but were out-manœuvred and brilliantly repulsed by Doyley in a fashion which atoned for previous disgraces. "Thus," he wrote triumphantly to Cromwell (July 12th, 1658), "hath the Lord made known His salvation. His righteousness hath He openly shewed in the sight of the heathen." Unfortunately by the time the dispatch arrived such language was almost out of date. For the Protector, whose eyes it was meant to gladden, was lying dead in Henry the Seventh's Chapel, whither Blake had preceded him eighteen months before, both worn to the death by the cares of the war which was to have given England the Spanish Main, but gave her no more than Jamaica, "to bear spices and poisons and other produce to this day."

J. W. FORTESCUE.

GENTLEMEN OF LEISURE.

You have learned many things, my friend, but one thing you have *not* learned—the art of resting. Once in the ardour of youth there shone before me a golden star in heaven, and on the deep azure around it, *Ohne Hast, ohne Rast*, in letters of steady flame. But now I see more frequently a plain little stone set in the earth, with the inscription, *Rest and be thankful*.—*The Intellectual Life*.

ABOUT old-fashioned men, as about old books and old-world places, there is a peculiar charm. They and their fashions interest us by the very contrast they afford with ourselves and our surroundings. It is as refreshing to go back sometimes from this work-day world and dwell a while among them as to turn aside from the dusty highway into a cool green place.

But yet, when we consider, there is an element of pathos in it all. Our memories are full of faces of past days, some of them gracious and good, some less pleasant, yet hallowed for us by the intervention of years. If we look at the characters there represented, we find them less common now, nay, in some cases, wholly unknown. We live in an age of hurry and feverish anxiety. Men live and work in a whirlwind, eagerly striving after many good things and pleasures; their fellows, even their friends, know little about them; their wives and families have only a slight acquaintance with them. They have no time for anything but business; and so they bustle and scheme until Death comes with his sponge and wipes them off the face of the earth, and there is an end of them. The atmosphere which we breathe nowadays is thicker and dustier than of old. We feel like Heine in Paris, hearing nothing but "the rattle of wheels, the clatter of hammers, street-cries, and the jing-

ling of pianos, and longing for the trees and the fresh breezes of the forest of Broceliaunde." The men of the old-school,—the gentlemen of leisure we may call them—did things in a different way. They were content to do their duty and earn their daily bread. They had time for many pleasures and were much respected in the country-side. They had room in their lives to cultivate their natures, grow wise if they wished, serve God, enjoy life, and make a good ending. All of which are desirable things, though of somewhat less account in these times.

Of two characters in those pleasant, easy-going days we may be permitted to speak. One belonged to a most respectable class; the other was the essence of disrespectability. One was prosperous and has left a memory behind him; the other was poor and is forgotten. But in one respect the country parson and the wayside tramp were alike; both were emphatically and indisputably gentlemen of leisure.

The lines of the old minister had fallen in pleasant places. The high-road from the capital to the south, coming down from the moorlands, dipped into a little valley before entering the pass which led it through the hills to the plains beyond. Just past the village by the burnside, in the great beech hedge which bordered the road, the traveller, if he were an observant man, might see a small green gate. In the spring this was overhung with lilacs and laburnum, and in autumn the great dog-rose bushes on either side used to send sprays of red berries athwart it. Here the postman left the letters, laying them below the roots of a hawthorn, where the old man found them in his morning walk. Down from the gate was a narrow gravelled

path, leading through a thicket of firs and larches. Even in the warmest day in summer there was coolness here. The place was filled with birds who lived unmolested. A pair of jays nested year after year: magpies often came hither; and one memorable spring two goldfinches reared a brood in one of the firs.

At the end of the trees, where the path became broader, you caught a glimpse of the house. Square and whitewashed, like so many country mansees, it was almost covered with narrow pointed ivy. Round the foot ran a broad border of flowers, old-fashioned roses were trained against the side, and pear trees and plum trees on the south wall. In their season there was a goodly show of blossoms; great scarlet poppies, irises, and lilies were varied by those quieter flowers more famed for perfume than for colour. The silver-gray southern-wood with that sweet smell which fills many a cottage garden, lavender, and mint grew luxuriantly: purple clematis, jasmine, and white-belled convolvulus twined over the porch; and at one corner of the house a great bed of thyme scented the air like that Sicilian thyme whereof Theocritus sings. Below the house stretched a lawn, small but with turf like velvet and shaded by noble trees. One of them, a copper-beech, was a source of endless pleasure to its owner. He would sit of a night on a garden-seat and watch the sun slanting over the hills and firing the topmost branches. Beyond the trees a part was kept as a bowling-green, where the players of the village assembled on the summer evenings. Here too the minister would often bring his books and write his sermons seated on the grass. Bordering the lawn, extending from the garden wall to the shrubbery, of rhododendrons, was the long plot where the old man reared his favourite flowers. He had tulips of many colours, grown from bulbs brought from Holland by his grandfather, strange old-fashioned plants from cuttings out of old castle gardens,

and a thicket of wild flowers from the woods and fields. He had made use of the stream from a well on the green slope of the hill to form a little pool surrounded by ferns and mosses. It was pleasant to lie here in the warm weather, listening to the elfin tinkle of the water and the drowsy hum of bees in the limes. A delightfully mingled scent of lime blossom and cool green moss haunted the place, lulling the senses to sleep with suggestions of dripping sea-caves and summer woodlands. Some dozen fish lived in the pond, notably one big trout which we used to dream of in our boyhood. Thence, if you wandered down the gravelled path between high box borders with gooseberry bushes and apple trees on either side, you came to the little summer-house where you might sit and look across the low hedge, away over field and moor to where a glint of the Tweed shone below the hills.

Here, in this garden, the old man loved to walk of a morning and evening and smoke a meditative pipe. To him it was his kingdom. He knew every flower and shrub, every bush and tree; and few things gave him greater pleasure than to show to his friends the beauties of his little domain.

But, had we gone to the manse in the forenoon, we should have found him in his study. We have a vivid recollection of that pleasant, gray room. In summer the sunlight came in through the roses about the window, and played up and down among the great volumes on the lower shelves. In winter the firelight glowed on the brown calf and vellum backs, bringing out rich lights and colours on their sober surfaces. The owner of the room was in harmony with it. The tall figure, somewhat bent with study, the keen scholarly face, beautiful with that light which one sees only on the faces of ministers who have grown old in their calling, the kindly voice,—all combined with the fine courteous air of a gentleman of the old school,

made his appearance singularly attractive.

His library, though only that of a country parson, was by no means out of date. It was his custom to pay a half-yearly visit to the capital from which he usually brought a parcel of books. The Fathers of the Church in huge leather-backed folios filled the lower shelves. The works of Leighton, that scholarly Archbishop of Glasgow whom the minister admired, Knox, Calvin, Buchanan, had their places; and strange old volumes of theology, too, for he had a taste for the out of the way. One and all, "he loved them well, they knew his hand." You might find many a rare edition of English classics, picked up at book-stalls or bought at sales in country houses; a *Spenser* with the curious title-page engraving, and a *Pilgrim's Progress* with the quaint early frontispiece. Up in a little shelf beside the fireplace was a row of small duodecimos. Here were his especial treasures,—an Elzevir *Imitatio Christi* in vellum with its height untouched by the binder's shears, a *Tacitus* from the same press, and copies of some of the jealously repressed little volumes of the English Reformation.

All the house was like the study, pleasant and comfortable. An old housekeeper reigned indoors; outside, an elderly man looked after the garden and stable on week-days, and on the Sabbath acted as beadle and precentor.

Across the road from the manse, in a grove of elm-trees, stood the church. It was a little plain building and the congregation even plainer,—the people of the village with a few shepherds and farmers from the hills. Here for many a summer and winter the old man preached. He belonged to that much-despised party in the Scottish Church, the Moderates. They numbered many worthless fellows, it may be, but some good men redeemed them; some who, like our friend, were moderate in the best sense, strangers to intolerance, following the

Socratic precept of *μηδὲν ἄγαν*, and showing their hearts by their lives. He had the love of all his parishioners; there was not a family in the countryside where he had not baptised or married or buried some one, and folk said that no other had such a kindly, consoling way in the House of Death. Surely this was *praesidium et dulce decus* sufficient for any man.

In his younger days he had been a great sportsman. He was esteemed an experienced curler on the ice, where it is said he once thrashed a burly farmer for using profane language in his presence. In the fall of the year he used to shoot wildfowl on the moors; and, when we knew him, he was wont to show a case of stuffed birds in the hall which he had shot.

But most his measured words of praise
Caressed the angler's easy ways,—
His idly meditative days,
His rustic diet.

Many a summer day he spent with rod in hand by the Tweed, where he said he found more inspiration than in St. Augustine. As he grew older he kept himself more and more to his garden, except when he left it to visit his people. And so he passed his quiet, uneventful days until the dark messenger came and bade him go hence.

We well remember the last time we heard him preach. He had some fame as a preacher in the neighbourhood, and had once declined a call to a large city congregation. The pulpit stood in front of a great coloured window in memory of some former lord of the manor. It was a warm June day, and the light, coming through the blue-robed Christ, cast a strange halo round the old man, like the blue glow on the clouds before a snowstorm. Seldom had we heard a more beautiful sermon, filled, as it was, with the quaintest wisdom and charity and that strength born of "toil unsevered from tranquillity." One might have said of it as was said of old, *Verba ista sunt senum otiosis-*

simorum. A fortnight later the carrier brought us a letter from the minister's man, which announced in curious words of wondrous spelling that his master was dead. Peace to his ashes; *sic itur ad astra!*

II.

The other, you may find by the riverside. He is angling with a hazel wand for trout, and no doubt his pockets, that do duty for a basket, are well filled, for he is skilled from long experience. He wears a broad blue bonnet, very dirty and faded, with some casts of gut wound round it. His gray homespun clothes are torn and patched in many places, and everywhere stained with earth and peat. His boots have once belonged to a shepherd, for they have the great thickness and iron-shod toes which are necessary for moorland walking. His face and neck, and the long brawny arms, which he has bared to free his hook from a tree-root, are as swarthy as a Moor's; and some thin gray locks, straggling down over his ears, make a pleasant contrast with his brown skin. He cannot be over forty, but rough living has whitened his hair before its time.

The man's appearance is bold and cheerful. If the advice of Mephistopheles to Faust be true, and self-possession be the only art of life, then assuredly he has found the secret of existence. He takes life as it comes, the green and the gray of it, the summer and the winter. He has chosen the life that suits him best, free to wander where he will, with no restraint of work or duty. He fishes much, poaches a little, does an odd job or two at a farm or village, carries news, occasionally makes the brushes known as "heather-besoms," helps at the lambing-time, and, for the most part, enjoys himself. He is interesting and worth consideration, for he is one of the few relics of aristocracy which remain to us.

But, though all tramps are leisurely,

there are but few who can be called gentlemen. Most of them are disreputable fellows. Some poor creatures have a dingy wife and children to drag with them over the country. Surely such men will have a better fate in the next world, for they have a sorry one in this. Many are beggars, and, excepting the King's Bedesmen, no beggar ever was a gentleman. Some God has gifted with health and strength, instead of which (to revive the old joke) they go about the country stealing hens. For such are reserved the jail and the ill-will of all honest men. But some (who are to be found for the most part in hilly places) are men of good character and good heart, who have taken to the life for the life's sake. They never enter the city, and, if you suggest such a thing, will indignantly ask if you expect them "to bide at a lodgin' house like a common gangrel body." They never beg, for they give something in return for their food. Many a shepherd would gladly keep such a traup overnight for the sake of hearing the news from the great world beyond the gray hills which bound his ken.

In former days the blue-bonneted wanderer was more welcome. Richard Jefferies, in one of his charming essays, gives a notice which he had seen and which ran as follows: "All persons found wandering abroad, lying, lodging, or being in any barn, out-house, or in the open air, and not giving a good account of themselves, will be apprehended as rogues and vagabonds, and be either publicly whipt or sent to the house of correction, and afterwards disposed of according to law, by order of the magistrates. Any person who shall apprehend any rogue or vagabond will be entitled to a reward of ten shillings." A tramp had no such law to fear in our countryside. At some farm-houses his coming was eagerly looked for; and even at the laird's house he was given the seat at the fire for the sake of his news. There is

a story told of a well-known Peeblesshire laird of last century that, when one of the fraternity presented himself at his door, he demanded if he had any news. "Nane, sir," was the reply. "Then get ye gone," said the laird, "and dinna come back till ye've something to tell." After a few weeks the beggar appeared again. He told the servant that he had great news for his master, and was immediately brought into the room where that worthy sat with his wife. "Well," said the laird, "what's new the day?" "Oh," said the tramp, "I was just gaun to tell ye that I had been doon below i' the ill place sin' I saw ye last." "And what saw ye there?" asked the laird. "Mickle the same as here, the puir hadden doon wi' the great; but the Deil showed me a muckle chair aside the fire that he said he was keepin' for the laird o' B . . ." "You see, my dear," said the old man, turning to his wife, "I am preferred wherever I go." Another old man, in whom pride and curiosity were strangely mingled, was wont to drive every tramp from his door with blows and curses; and then, when the latter element triumphed, to run after him and beseech him to return. There was not then that hard and fast boundary between rich and poor, between the respectable and the disreputable, that is one of the banes of our modern life. Men were more companionable and kindly (we use the word in its old and proper sense). Edie Ochiltree, that classic vagabond, would now be impossible; a capable man, without any trade or fixed place of abode,—parochial boards and charitable societies would hold up their hands in horror and amaze! Yet the fact that we love Edie much more than a flourishing tradesman, as we prefer Ulysses to Alcinous, proves that a wandering life may develop these qualities in our nature which endear a man to his fellows at least as well as a life of staid and sober vacuity.

A strange time the tramp had of it.

Sometimes his course took him through green valleys and rich pastures, and sometimes over bleak moorlands with half a score of miles from one house to another. He was an old struggler, like the beggar woman who asked alms from Dr. Johnson. In warm summer weather he would sleep in a bush of heather, or behind a hedge, or in a covert of brackens in a wood. In the winter some straw in a barn sufficed for him, and he counted himself fortunate when he was allowed to lie before the ashes in the smithy fire. When he came to a village, he made first for the blacksmith's shop. Here, if he was a strong man, he assisted the smith, and, in return, was granted the use of the fire to cook his supper. Here, too, he would entertain the village idlers till late in the night with stories and country gossip.

He lived, if ever a man did, from hand to mouth. He seemed to be uncomfortable with money in his possession. When he had made more than usual, in hay-time or harvest, he used to journey to the nearest market-town and seek out an inn, where he too frequently followed the advice which Luther gave to the young student perplexed with fore-ordination and free-will, and got very drunk. After a week or so of excess, he proceeded on his way with a look of relief on his face, as though his short prosperity had been a sore trial to him.

An old vagrant, amiably disposed, was a treasure to those who loved old-world stories. He could tell how Tweed came down in the great flood, and the hair-breadth escapes of the shepherds, of hard winters and summers, of the coaching days and how the guard and driver of the Edinburgh mail were lost at Erickstanehead. He had legends and horrible tales of elves and goblins, in which he half believed. To crown all, he had his own experiences, for he had not travelled the country for a lifetime for nothing. Some of these were romantic enough, in all truth, sounding like some chronicle of the Middle Ages.

The man had few wants. A pipe of tobacco and a warm fire raised him to the stars, as a much smaller thing, the mere insertion of his name in a list of lyric poets, did the Roman singer. Hard fare and rough quarters had made him contented with little. He was seldom ill, for his body was inured to heat and cold alike. So, since he had the primary blessings of health and contentment, he might very well do without the vastly inferior advantage of riches.

Yet his way through the world was not unattended with evils. If trudging mile upon mile under a blazing sun or in a drifting snowstorm, with no sure hope of rest and food at the end, be a hardship, then the tramp had many. Few people know what it is to be utterly wearied. They have never felt that terrible sickness, that swimming of the brain, that painful weakness in the limbs, which a man feels when he has passed beyond the limits of his strength. If we add to these a parched throat and a burning head in the hot weather, and numbed hands and feet and a chilled heart in winter, we may get some faint idea of

the pleasures of those forced marches which the tramp enjoyed. Moreover, people were not always hospitable; he often could get no work of any kind and had to live on the scantiest of meals. His days, certainly, were not all spent in a

ditch supine,
Or footing it over the sunlit lea.

There were seasons of hard toil and harder fare, of long winter nights spent on cold moors and short winter days in frosty fields.

Then at last there came to the tramp, as there comes to all of us, the crowning misfortune of death. He had been all his life a man of many acquaintances and few friends, so that he made his end alone. It might be in the corner of a barn or up in a nook of the hillside. He was fortunate in having none of the miserable paraphernalia of death at hand. With the free, cool air blowing about him, in the midst of the scenes of his life-long wanderings, he made his quiet exit from the world, and the country people buried him in that corner of the churchyard reserved for such, where he lay among his fellows.

BARBARA GOLDING.

THE last time Field Osgood saw Miss Barbara Golding was on a certain summer afternoon at the lonely Post, Telegraph, and Customs Station known as Rahway on the Queensland coast. It was at Rahway also that he first and last saw Mr. Louis Bachelor. He had had excellent opportunities for knowing Barbara Golding, since through many years she had been governess (and something more) to his sisters Janet, Agnes, and Lorna. She had been engaged in Sydney as governess simply, but Wandenong cattle station was far up country, and she gradually came to perform the functions of milliner and dressmaker, encouraged thereto by the family for her unerring taste and skill. Her salary, however, was proportionately increased, and it did not decline when her office as governess became practically a sinecure as her pupils passed beyond the sphere of the school-room. Perhaps George Osgood, the owner of Wandenong, did not make an allowance to Barbara Golding for her services as counsellor and confidant of his family; but neither did he subtract anything from her earnings in those infrequent years when she journeyed alone to Sydney on those mysterious visits which so mightily puzzled the good people of Wandenong. The boldest, however, and most off-hand of them could never discover what Barbara Golding did not choose to tell. She was slight, almost frail in form, and very gentle of manner; but she also possessed that rare species of courtesy which, never declining at any moment in fastidiousness nor lapsing into familiarity, checked all curious intrusion, was it never so insinuating; and the milliner and dressmaker was not less self-poised and compelling of respect than the governess and confidant.

In some particulars the case of Louis Bachelor was similar; for besides being the Post, Telegraph, and Customs Officer, and Justice of the Peace at Rahway, he was available and valuable to the Government as a meteorologist. The Administration recognised this after a few years of voluntary and earnest labour on Louis Bachelor's part; it was not his predictions concerning floods or droughts that roused this official appreciation, but the fulfilment of those predictions. At length a yearly *honorarium* was sent to him, and then again, after a dignified procrastination, there was forwarded to him a suggestion from the Cabinet that he should come to Brisbane and take a more important position. It was when this patronage was declined that the Premier (dropping for a moment into that bushman's jargon which in truth came naturally to him) said irritably that Louis Bachelor was a "—— old fossil who didn't know when he'd got his dover in the dough," which, being interpreted into the slang of the old world, means his knife in the official loaf. But the fossil went on as before, known by name to the merest handful of people in the colony, though they all profited, directly or indirectly, by his scientific services; and as unknown to the dwellers at Wandenong as they were to him, and he again to the citizens of the moon.

It was the custom for Janet and Agnes Osgood to say that Barbara Golding had a history; and they said it with little mannerisms peculiar to young ladies of modern promise. Janet declared to her sister Agnes that the Maid of Honour (so they called her) might, if all were known about her, be translated into a novel; and Agnes in appropriate season had, with slight variations, said the same

to Janet. On every occasion the sentiment was uttered with that fresh conviction in tone which made it appear to be born again. The occasion when it seemed to have had the most pregnant origin was one evening after Janet had been consulting Miss Barbara on the mysteries of the garment in which she was to be married to Druce Gallant, part owner of Booldal Station. "Aggie," remarked this coming bride, "her face flushed up ever so pink when I said to her that she seemed to know exactly how a *trousseau* ought to be. I'm afraid, dear, I said it with a faint suggestion in my voice,—unpardonable with her, she always is so considerate—but it had its effect. I wonder! She is well-bred enough to have been anybody; and you know it was the Bishop who recommended her."

It was not long after this that Druce Gallant arrived at Wandenong and occupied the attention of Janet until supper-time, when he electrified the company by the narration of his adventures on the previous evening with Roadmaster the mysterious bushranger, whose name was now in every man's mouth, and who apparently worked with no confederates, a somewhat perilous proceeding, though it reduced the chances of betrayal. Druce Gallant was about to camp on the plains for the night, in preference to riding on to a miserable bush-tavern a few miles away, when he was suddenly accosted in the scrub by a gentlemanly-looking fellow on horseback, who, from behind his mask, asked him to give up what money he had about him, together with his watch and ring. The request was emphasised by the presence of a revolver held at an easy but suggestive angle from the pommel of the saddle. The disadvantage to Druce Gallant was obvious; he merely requested that he should be permitted to keep the ring, since it had many associations, remarking at the same time that he would be pleased to give an equivalent for it if the bushranger would accompany him to Wandenong.

At the mention of Wandenong the highwayman asked his name. On being told he handed back the money, the watch, and the ring, and politely requested a cigar, saying that the Osgoods deserved consideration at his hands, and that their friends were safe from molestation. Then he added, with some grim humour, that, if Druce Gallant had no objection to spending an hour with Roadmaster over a fire and billy of tea, he would be glad of his company; for bush-ranging, according to his system, was but dull work. Struck with the unusual character of the man the young squatter consented, and together they sat for two hours, the highwayman, however, never removing the mask from his eyes. They talked of many things and at last Gallant ventured to ask his companion about the death of Blood Finchley, the owner of Tarawan sheep run. At this Roadmaster became moody, and rose to leave; but, as if on second thoughts, he said that Finchley's companion, whom he allowed to go unrobbed and untouched, was both a coward and a liar; that the slain man had fired thrice needlessly, and had wounded him in the neck (the scar of which he showed) before he drew trigger. Gallant then told him that besides the *posse* of police, a number of squatters and bushmen had banded to hunt him down, and advised him to make for the coast if he could, give up his present business and leave the country. At this Roadmaster laughed and said that his fancy was not seaward yet, though that might come; and then, with a courteous wave of his hand, he jumped on his horse and rode away.

The Osgoods speculated long and curiously on Roadmaster's identity, as did indeed the whole colony; and at length the father concluded that it might be a well-bred scoundrel named Calthorpe whom he had saved from prison at Brisbane a couple of years before. He could not think of any other likely person.

And here it may be said, that people of any observation (though, of neces-

sity, they were few, since Rahway attracted only busy sugar-planters and their workmen) were used to speak of Louis Bachelor as one who must certainly have a history if he could but be persuaded to tell it. The person most likely to have the power of inquisition into his affairs was his faithful aboriginal servant Gongi. But records and history were only understood by Gongi when they were restricted to the number of heads taken in tribal battle. At the same time he was a devoted slave to the man who, at the risk of his own life, had rescued him from the murderous spears of his aboriginal foes. That was a kind of archive within Gongi's comprehension, from the contemplation of which he turned to speak of Louis Bachelor as, "That fellow budgery marmi b'longin' to me," which, in civilised language, means "my good master." Gongi frequently dilated on this rescue, and he would, for purposes of illustration, take down from his master's wall an artillery-officer's sabre and show how his assailants were dispersed.

From the presence of this sword it was not unreasonably assumed that Louis Bachelor had at some time been in the army. He was not, however, communicative on this point, though he shrewdly commented on European wars and rumours of wars when they occurred. He also held strenuous opinions on the conduct of government and the suppression of public evils, based obviously upon a military conception of things. For bushrangers he would have a modern Tyburn, but this and other tragic suggestions lacked conviction when confronted with his verdicts given as Justice of the Peace. He pronounced anathemas in a grand and airy fashion, but as if he were speaking by the card, a Don Quixote whose mercy would be vaster than his wrath. This was the impression he gave to Field Osgood on the day when the young squatter introduced himself to Rahway, where he had come on a mission to its one official. The young man's father had

a taste for many things; astronomy was his latest, and he had bought from the Government a telescope which, excellent in its day, had been superseded by others of later official purchase. He had brought it to Wandenong, had built a home for it, and had got it into trouble. He had then sent to Brisbane for assistance, and the astronomer of the Government had referred him to the postmaster at Rahway, "prognosticator" of the meteorological column in *The Courier*, who would be instructed to give Mr. Osgood every help, especially as the occultation of Venus was near. Men do not send letters by post in a new country when personal communication is possible, and Field Osgood was asked by his father to go to Rahway. When Field wished for the name of this rare official, the astronomer's letter was handed over with a sarcastic request that the name might be deciphered; but the son was not more of an antiquary than his father, and he had to leave without it. He rode to the coast, and there took a passing steamer to Rahway.

From the sea Rahway looked a tropical paradise. The bright green palisades of mangrove on the right crowded down to the water's edge; on the left was the luxuriance of a tropical jungle; in the centre was an arc of opal shore fringed with cocoa-palms, and beyond these a handful of white dwellings. Behind was a sweeping monotony of verdure stretching back into the great valley of the Popri, and over all the heavy languor of the South.

But the beauty was a delusion. When Field Osgood's small boat swept up the sands on the white crest of a league-long roller, how different was the scene! He saw a group of dilapidated huts, a tavern called *The Angel's Rest*, a blackfellow's hut, and the bareness of three government offices, all built on piles, that the white ants should not humble them suddenly to the dust; a fever-making mangrove swamp, black at the base as the filthiest moat, and tenanted by rep-

tiles; feeble palms, and a sickly breath creeping from the jungle to mingle with the heavy scent of the last consignment of sugar from the Popri valley. It brought him to a melancholy standstill, disturbed at last by Gongi touching him on the arm and pointing towards the post-office. His language to Gongi was strong; he called the place by names that were not polite; and even on the threshold of the official domain said that the Devil would have his last big muster there. But from that instant his glibness declined. The squatters are the aristocracy of Australia, and rural postmasters are not always considered eligible for a dinner-party at Government House; but when Louis Bachelor came forward to meet his visitor the young fellow's fingers quickly caught his hat from his head, and an off-hand greeting became a respectful salute.

At first the young man was awed by the presence of the grizzled gentleman, and he struggled with his language to bring it up to the classic level of this old Huguenot's speech. "Huguenot" is used figuratively, though the young squatter came to know subsequently that Louis Bachelor was descended from a family part Irish, part French. But there was something more than Celt and Gaul in the man, a steady quality of race or discipline that made him, even in this humble position, a little grand and more than a little grave. Before they had spoken a dozen words Field Osgood said to himself, "What a quaint team he and the Maid of Honour would make! It's the same kind of thing in both, with the difference of sex and circumstance." The nature of his visitor's business pleased the old man, and infused his courtesy with warmth. Yes, he would go to Wandenong with pleasure; the Government had communicated with him about it; a substitute had been offered; he was quite willing to take his first leave in four years; astronomy was a great subject, he had a very good and obedient telescope of his own,

though not nearly so large as that at Wandenong; he would telegraph at once to Brisbane for the substitute to be sent on the following day, and would be ready to start in twenty-four hours; after visiting Wandenong he would go to Brisbane for some scientific necessities—and so on through smooth parentheses of conversation. Under all the bluntness of the Bush young Osgood had a refinement which now found expression in an attempt to make himself agreeable, not a difficult task, since, thanks to his father's tastes and a year or two at college, he had a smattering of physical science. He soon won his way to the old man's heart, and laboratory, which in this desolate spot had been developed through years of patience and ingenious toil.

Left alone that evening in Louis Bachelor's sitting-room, Field Osgood's eyes were caught by a portrait on the wall, the likeness of a beautiful girl. Something about the face puzzled him. Where had he seen it? More than a little of an artist he began to reproduce the head on paper. He put it in different poses; he added to it; he took away from it; he gave it a child's face, preserving the one striking expression; he made it that of a woman—of an elderly, grave woman. Why, what was this? Barbara Golding! Yes, the same expression and contour of features, only many years older. He then carefully and quickly made from memory an excellent head of Barbara Golding, being careful to retain *that* expression. Then he tore up the other pieces of paper and waited, seeing in his hand the possibility of a romance. He would not spoil the development of the drama, of which he now held the fluttering prologue, by any blunt treatment; he would touch this and that nerve gently to see what past connection there was between

These dim blown birds beneath an alien sky.

He mooned along in this fashion, a fashion in which his bushmen friends

would not have recognised him, until his host entered. Then, in that auspicious moment when his own pipe and his companion's cigarette were being lighted, he said, "I've been amusing myself with drawing since you left, sir, and I've produced this," handing over the paper.

Louis Bachelor took the sketch and walking to the window for better light said, "Believe me, I have a profound respect for the artistic talent. I myself once had—ah!" He had sharply paused as he saw the pencilled head and he now stood looking fixedly at it. He turned slowly, came to the portrait on the wall, and compared it with that in his hand. Then with a troubled face he said: "You have much talent, but it is—it is too old—much too old—and very sorrowful."

"I intended the face to show age and sorrow, Mr. Bachelor. Would not the original of that have both?"

"She had sorrow,—she had sorrow,—but," and he looked sadly at the sketch again, "it is too old for her. Her face was very young, always very young."

"But has she not sorrow now, sir?" the other persisted gently.

The gray head was shaken sadly, and the unsteady voice meditatively murmured, "Such beauty, such presence! I was but five-and-thirty then." There was a slight pause and then with his hand touching the young man's shoulder, Louis Bachelor continued: "You are young; you have a good heart; I know men. You have the sympathy of the artist—why should I not speak to you? I have been silent about it so long. You have brought the past back, I know not how, so vividly! I dream here, I work here; men come with merchandise and go again; they only bind my tongue; I am not of them; but you are different, as it seems to me, and young. God gave me a happy youth. My eyes were bright as yours; my heart as fond. You love—is it not so? Ah, you smile and blush like an honest man. Well, so much the more I can speak now! God gave me then

strength and honour and love,—blessed be His name! And then He visited me with sorrow, and if I still mourn I have peace too and a busy life." Here he looked at the sketch again. "Then I was a soldier. *She* was my world. Ah, true love is a great thing, a great thing! She had a brother. They two with their mother were alone in the world, and we were to be married. One day at Gibraltar I received a letter from her saying that our marriage could not be, that she was going away from England, that those lines were her farewell, and that she commended me to the love of Heaven. Such a letter it was—so saintly, so unhappy, so mysterious! When I could get leave I went to England. She—they—had gone and none knew whither; or, if any of her friends knew, none would speak. I searched for her everywhere. At last I came to Australia, and am here now, no longer searching, but waiting; for there is that above us!" His lips moved as if in prayer. "And this is all I have left of her," fondling the portrait, "except memory."

The young man rejoined warmly, yet with discreet sympathy: "Sir, I respect, and I hope I understand, your confidence." Then a little nervously, "Might I ask her name?"

The reply was spoken to the portrait: "Barbara,—Barbara Golding."

With Louis Bachelor the young squatter approached Wandenong homestead in some excitement. He had said no word to his companion about that Barbara Golding who played such a gracious part in the home of the Osgoods. He had arranged the movement of the story to his fancy, but would it occur in all as he hoped? With an amiability that was almost malicious in its adroit suggestiveness, though, to be sure, it was honest, he had induced the soldier to talk of his past. His words naturally, and always, radiated to the sun whose image was now hidden, but for whose memory no superscription on monument or cenotaph was needed. Now it was a scrap of song, then a tale, and

again a verse, by which the old soldier was delicately worked upon; until, at last, as they entered the paddocks of Wandenong, stars and telescopes and even governments had been completely forgotten in the personal literature of sentiment.

Yet Field Osgood was not quite at his ease. Now that it was at hand he rather shrank from the renewal of these ancient loves. There was Barbara Golding's story not yet fathomed; yes, his plot had some flying threads which he had not yet gathered. Apart from everything else he knew that no woman's nerves are to be trusted. He hoped fortune would so favour him that he could arrange for the meeting of these two alone, or, at least, in his presence only. He had so far fostered this possibility by arriving at the station at nightfall. What next? He turned and looked at the soldier, a figure out of Hogarth which even dust and travel left unspoiled. It was certain that the two should meet where Field Osgood, squatter and romancer, should be prompter, orchestra, and audience, and he alone. Vain lad! When they drew rein the young man took his companion at once to his own detached quarters known as the Barracks, and then proceeded to the house. After greetings with his family he sought Barbara Golding, who was in the school-room, piously employed, Agnes said, in putting the final touches to Janet's *trousseau*. He went across the square to the school-room, and, looking through the window, saw that she was quite alone. A few moments later he stood at the schoolroom door with Louis Bachelor. With his hand on the latch he hesitated. Was it not fairer to give some warning to either? Too late! He opened the door and they entered. She was sewing, and a book lay open beside her, a faded, but stately little figure whose very garments had an air. She rose, seeing at first only Field Osgood, who greeted her and then said, "Miss Barbara, I wish to introduce to you an old friend." Then he stepped

back and the two were face to face. Barbara Golding's cheeks became pale but she did not stir; the soldier with an exclamation of surprise half joyful, half pathetic, took a step forward, and then became motionless also. Their eyes met and stayed intent. This was not quite what the young man had expected. At length the soldier bowed low and the woman responded gravely. At this point Field withdrew to stand guard at the door, that the action in his strange little play should not be interrupted.

Barbara Golding's eyes were dim with tears. The soldier gently said, "I received,—” and then paused. She raised her eyes to his. "I received a letter from you,—five-and-twenty years ago."

"Yes, five-and-twenty-years ago."

"I hope you cannot guess what pain it gave me."

"Sir," she answered faintly, "I can conceive it, from the pain it gave to me."

There was a pause, and then he stepped forward and holding out his hand, said, "Will you permit me?" He kissed her fingers courteously, and she blushed. "I have waited," he added, "for God to bring this to pass." She shook her head sadly, and her eyes sought his beseechingly, as though he should spare her; but perhaps he could not see that. "You spoke of a great obstacle then; has it been removed?"

"It is still between us."

"Is it likely ever to vanish?"

"I—I do not know."

"You cannot tell me what it is?"

"Oh, you will not ask me," she pleaded.

He bowed again: "Might I dare to hope, Barbara, that you still regard me with—" he hesitated.

The fires of a modest valour flattered in her cheeks, and she pieced out his sentence: "With all my life's esteem." Still she was a woman and she added, "But I am not young now, and I am very poor."

"Barbara," he said; "I am not rich

and I am old ; but you, you have not changed ; you are beautiful, as you always were."

The moment was crucial. He stepped towards her, but her eyes held him back. He hoped that she would speak, but she only smiled sadly. He waited, but in the waiting hope faded and he only said, at last, in a voice of new resolve grown out of dead expectancy: "Your brother,—is he well?"

"I hope so," she somewhat painfully replied.

"Is he in Australia?"

"Yes. I have not seen him for years, but he is here."

As if a thought had suddenly come to him he stepped nearer, and made as if he would speak, but the words halted on his lips, and he turned away again. She glided to his side and touched his arm. "I am glad that you trust me," she faltered.

"There is no more that need be said," he answered.

And now, woman-like denying, she pitied too. "If I ever can, shall,—shall I send for you to tell you all?" she murmured.

"You remember I told you that the world had but one place for me, and that was by your side; that where you are, Barbara——"

"Hush, oh hush!" she interrupted gently. "Yes, I remember everything."

"There is no power can alter what is come of Heaven," he said, smiling faintly.

She looked with limpid eyes upon him as he bowed over her hand, and she spoke with a sweet calm, "God be with you, Louis!"

Strange as it may seem, Field Osgood did not tell his sisters and his family of this romance which he had brought to the vivid close of a first act. He felt,—the more so because Louis Bachelor had said no word about it, but had only pressed his hand again and again,—that he was somehow put upon his honour, and he thought it a fine thing to stand on a platform of unspoken compact with this gentleman

of a social school unfamiliar to him ; from which it may be seen that cattle-breeding and bullock-driving need not make a man a boor. What his sisters guessed when they found that Barbara Golding and the visitor were old friends is another matter ; but they could not pierce their brother's reserve on the point.

No one at Wandenong saw the parting between the two when Louis Bachelor, his task with the telescope ended, left again for the coast ; but indeed it might have been seen by all men, so outwardly formal was it, even as their brief conversations had been since they met again. But is it not known by those who look closely upon the world that there is nothing so tragic as the formal?

Field Osgood accompanied his friend to the sea, but the name of Barbara Golding was not mentioned, nor was any reference made to her until the moment of parting. Then the elder man said: "Sir, your consideration and delicacy of feeling have moved me, and touched *her*. We have not been blind to your singular kindness of heart and courtesy, and,—God bless you, my friend!"

On his way back to Wandenong Osgood heard exciting news of Roadmaster. The word had been passed among the squatters who had united to avenge Finchley's death that the bushranger was to be shot on sight, that he should not be left to the uncertainty of the law. The latest exploit of the daring freebooter had been to stop on the plains two members of a Royal Commission of Inquiry. He had relieved them of such money as was in their pockets, and then had caused them to write sumptuous cheques on their banks, payable to bearer. These he had cashed in the very teeth of the law, and actually paused in the street to read a description of himself posted on a telegraph-pole. "Inaccurate, quite inaccurate," he said to a bystander as he drew his riding-whip slowly along it, and then mounting

his horse rose leisurely away into the plains. Had he been followed it would have been seen that he directed his course to that point in the horizon where Wandenong lay, and held to it.

It would not perhaps have been pleasant to Agnes Osgood had she known that, as she hummed a song under a she-oak, a mile away from the homestead, a man was watching her from a clump of scrub near by; a man who, however gentlemanly his bearing, had a face where the devil of despair had set his foot, and who carried in his pocket more than one weapon of inhospitable suggestion. But the man intended no harm to her, for while she sang something seemed to have smoothed away the active evil of his countenance, and to have dispelled a threatening alertness that marked the whole personality.

Three hours later this same man crouched by the drawing-room window of the Wandenong homestead and looked in, listening to the same voice and sighing once or twice as he listened, until Barbara Golding entered the room and took a seat near the piano with her face turned full towards him. Then he forgot the music and looked long at the face, and at last rose, and stole silently away to where his horse was tied in the scrub. He mounted, and turning towards the house muttered: "A little more of this, and good-bye to my nerves! But it's pleasant to have the taste of it in my mouth for a minute! How would it look in Roadmaster's biography, that a girl just out of school brought the rain to his eyes!" He laughed a little bitterly, and then went on: "Poor Barbara! She mustn't know while I'm alive. Stretch out, my nag; we've a long road to travel to-night."

Yes, this was Edward Golding, the brother whom Barbara thought was still in prison at Sydney under another name, serving a term of fifteen years for manslaughter. If she had read the papers carefully she would have known that he had been

released two years before his time was up. It was eight years since she had seen him. Twice since then she had gone to visit him, but he would not see her. Bad as he had been, his desire was still strong that the family name should not be publicly reviled. At his trial his real name had not been made known, and at his request his sister sent him no letters. She had spoken to him but thrice in fifteen years. He had always persisted in his innocence, and it appeared to be established that he had not struck the fatal blow at the gambling brawl, but he was considered an accessory, and condemned as such. Going into gaol a reckless man he came out a constitutional criminal; that is, with the natural instinct for crime greater than the instinct for morality. He turned bushranger for one day, as he vowed to himself, to get money to take him out of the country; but having once entered the lists he left them no more, and, playing at deadly joust with the law, soon became known as Roadmaster, the most noted bushranger since the days of Captain Moonlight.

It was forgery on the name of his father's oldest friend that drove him and his from England. He had the choice of leaving his native land for ever or going to prison, and he chose the former. The sorrow of the crime killed his mother. From Adelaide, where they had made their new home, he wandered to the far interior and afterwards to Sydney; then came his imprisonment, and now he was free—but what a freedom!

With the name of Roadmaster often heard at Wandenong, Barbara Golding's heart had no warning instinct of who the bushranger was. She thought only and continuously of the day when he should be released, to begin the race of life again with her. She had yet to learn in what manner they come to the finish who make a false start.

Louis Bachelor, again in his place at Rahway, tried to drive away his guesses at the truth by his beloved

science. When sleep would not come at night he rose and worked in his laboratory; and the sailors of many a passing vessel saw the light of his lamp in the dim hours before the dawn and spoke of fever in the port of Rahway. Nor did they speak without reason; fever *was* preparing a victim for the sacrifice at Rahway, and Louis Bachelor was fed with its poison till he grew haggard and weak.

One night at this time he was sending his weather prognostications to Brisbane when a stranger entered from the shore. The old man did not at first look up, and the other leisurely studied him as the sounder clicked its message. When the key was closed the new-comer said, "Can you send a message to Brisbane for me?" "It is after hours; I cannot," was the reply. "But you were just sending one." "That was official, sir," and the elder man passed his hand wearily along his forehead. He was very pale. The other drew the telegraph-forms towards him and wrote on one, saying as he did so, "My business is important;" then handing over what he had written, and smiling ironically, added, "Perhaps you will consider that official."

Louis Bachelor took the paper and read as follows: "*To The Colonial Secretary, Brisbane. I am here to-night; to-morrow find me. Roadmaster the Bushranger.*" He read it twice before he fully comprehended it. Then he said, as if awaking from a dream, "You are——". "I am Roadmaster," was the complement to the unfinished sentence.

But now the soldier and official in the other were awake. He drew himself up, and appeared to measure his visitor as a swordsman would his enemy. "What is your object in coming here?" he asked. "For you to send that message if you choose; there is your telegraphic instrument. That *you* may arrest me peaceably if you wish; or otherwise, there are men at *The Angel's Rest* and a Chinaman or two here who might care for active service against Roadmaster."

And he laughed carelessly. "Am I to understand that you give yourself up to me?" "Yes, to you, Louis Bachelor, Justice of the Peace, to do what you will with for this night," was the reply.

The soldier's hands trembled but it was from imminent illness, not from fear or excitement. He came slowly towards the bushranger who, smiling, said as he advanced, "Yes, arrest me!" Louis Bachelor raised his hand as if to lay it on the shoulder of the other, but something in the eyes of the highwayman stayed his hand. "Proceed! Proceed, *Captain* Louis Bachelor," said Roadmaster in a changed tone. The hand fell to the old man's side. "Who are you?" he faintly exclaimed. "I know you, yet I cannot quite remember."

More and more the voice and manner of the outlaw altered as he replied with mocking bitterness, "I *was* Edward Golding, gentleman; I *became* Edward Golding, forger; I *am* Roadmaster, ex-convict and bushranger."

The old man's state was painful to see. More than fever was making him haggard now. "You—you—that! Edward?" he uttered brokenly. "Yes, all *that*. Will you arrest me now, sir?" "I—cannot."

And now the bushranger threw aside all bravado and irony, and said: "Captain Bachelor, I *knew* you could not. Why did I come? Listen! But first, will you shelter me here to-night?"

The soldier's honourable soul rose up against this thing, but he said slowly at last, "If it is to save you from peril, yes!"

Roadmaster laughed a little and rejoined: "By —, sir, you're a *man*! I only wanted to know if you *would* do it. But it isn't likely that I'd accept it of you, is it, Captain Bachelor? You've had it rough enough without my putting a rock in your swag that would spoil you for the rest of the tramp! You see I've even forgotten how to talk like a gentleman. And now, sir, I want to

show you, for Barbara's sake, my dirty log-book." Here he told the tale of his early sin and all that came of it, and then went on. "She didn't want to disgrace you, you understand. You were at Wandenong; I know that, never mind how. She'd marry you if I were out of the way. Well, I'm going to be out of the way. I'm going to leave this country, and she's to think I'm dead, you see."

At this point Louis Bachelor swayed and would have fallen, but that the bushranger's arms were thrown round him and helped him to a chair. "I'm afraid that I am ill," he said; "call Gongi. No, no, you cannot do that. Ah!" He had fainted.

The bushranger carried him to a bed and summoned Gongi and the woman from the tavern, and in another hour was riding away through the valley of the Popri. Before thirty-six hours had passed a note was delivered to a station-hand at Wandenong addressed to Barbara Golding and signed by the woman from *The Angel's Rest*. And within another two days Barbara Golding was at the bedside of Captain Louis Bachelor, battling with an enemy that is so often stronger than love and always kinder than shame.

In his wanderings the sick man was always with his youth and early manhood, and again and again he uttered Barbara's name in caressing or entreaty; though it was the Barbara of far-off days that he invoked; the present one he did not know. But the night in which the crisis, the fortunate crisis, of the fever occurred, he talked of a great flood coming from the North, and in his half-delirium bade them send to headquarters, and mournfully muttered of drowned plantations and human peril. Was this instinct and knowledge working through the disordered fancies of fever? Or was it mere coincidence that the next day a great storm and flood did sweep through the valley of the Popri, putting life in danger and submerging plantations?

It was on this day that Roadmaster found himself at bay in the mangrove

swamp not far from the port of Rahway, where he had expected to find a schooner to take him to the New Hebrides. It had been arranged for by a well-paid colleague in crime; but the storm had delayed the schooner, and the avenging squatters and bushmen were closing in on him at last. There was flood behind him in the valley, a foodless swamp on the left of him, open shore and jungle on the right, the swollen sea before him; and the only avenue of escape closed by Blood Finchley's friends. He had been eluding his pursuers for days with little food and worse than no sleep. He knew that he had played his last card and lost; but he had one thing yet to do; that which even the vilest do, if they can, before they pay the final penalty—to creep back for a moment into their honest past however dim and far away it may be. With incredible skill he had passed under the very rifles of his hunters, and now stood almost within the stream of light which came from the window of the sick man's room, where his sister was. There was to be no more hiding, no more strategy. He told Gongi and another that he was Roadmaster, and bid them say to his pursuers, should they appear, that he would come to them upon the shore when his visit to Louis Bachelor, whom he had known in other days, was over, indicating the place at some distance from the house where they would find him. He knew that these men would not make a breach of this invited contract, that they would give even a bushranger that moment of shrift.

He entered the house. The noise of the opening door brought his sister to the room. One need not tell of that meeting, nor of what it might have been had Barbara Golding known all.

At last she said, "Oh, Edward, you are free at last!"

"Yes, I am free at last," he quietly replied.

"I have always prayed for you, Edward, and for this."

"I know that, Barbara; but prayer

cannot do everything, can it? You see, though I was born a gentleman, I had a bad strain in me. I wonder if, somewhere, generations back, there was a pirate or a gipsy in our family." He had been going to say highwayman, but paused in time. "I always intended to be good and always ended by being bad. I wanted to be of the angels and play with the devils also. I liked saints,—you are a saint, Barbara—but I loved all sinners too. I hope when,—when I die, that the little bit of good that's in me will go where you are; for the rest of me, it must be as it may."

"Don't speak like that, Edward, please, dear. Yes, you have been very wicked, but you have been punished, oh! these long, long years!"

"I've lost a great slice of life by both the stolen waters and the rod, but I'm going to reform now, Barbara."

"You are going to reform! Oh, I knew you would! God has answered my prayer." How her eyes lighted!

He did not immediately speak again, for his ears, keener than hers, were listening to a confused sound of voices coming from the shore. At length he spoke firmly: "Yes, I'm going to reform, but it's on one condition."

Her eyes mutely asked a question, and he replied, "That you marry him," pointing to the inner room, "if he lives."

"He will live but I,—I cannot tell him, Edward," she sadly said.

"He knows."

"He knows! Did you dare to tell him?" It was the lover, not the sister, who spoke then.

"Yes. And he knows also that I'm going to reform,—that I'm going away."

Her face was hid in her hand. "And I kept it from him five-and-twenty years!—Where are you going, Edward?"

"To the Farewell Islands," he slowly replied.

And she, thinking he meant some

group in the Pacific, tearfully inquired, "Are they far away?"

"Yes, very far away, my girl."

"But you will write to me or come to see me again,—you will come to see me again, sometimes, Edward?"

He paused. He knew not at first what to reply, but at length he said, with a strangely determined flash of his dark eyes, "Yes, Barbara, I will come to see you again,—if I can." He stooped and kissed her. "Good-bye, Barbara."

"But, Edward, must you go to-night?"

"Yes, I must go now. They are waiting for me. Good-bye."

She would have stayed him but he put her gently back, and she said plaintively, "God keep you, Edward. Remember you said that you would come again to me."

"I shall remember," he said quietly, and he was gone.

Standing in the light from the window of the sick man's room he wrote a line in Latin on a slip of paper, (a remembered scrap of his boyhood's studies) begging of Louis Bachelor the mercy of silence, and gave it to Gongi, who whispered that he was surrounded. This he knew; he had not studied sounds in prison through the best years of his life for nothing. He asked Gongi to give the note to his master when he was better, and when it could be done unseen of any one. Then he turned and walked coolly towards the shore.

Two hours after he lay upon a heap of magnolia branches breathing his life away. And at the same moment of time that a rough but kindly hand closed the eyes of the bushranger, the woman from *The Angel's Rest* and Louis Bachelor saw the pale face of Roadmaster peer through the bedroom window at Barbara Golding sitting in a chair asleep; and she started and said through her half-wakefulness, looking at the window, "Where are you going, Edward?"

GILBERT PARKER.

THE POLITICAL WORLD OF FIELDING AND SMOLLETT.

It is on record that Sir Robert Walpole, deeming the family estate to be but a poor heritage for the children of so great a man as himself, took advantage of his position as Prime Minister to settle upon them certain sinecure offices worth many thousand pounds a year. The third son, who was no other than the celebrated Horace, seems to have been deeply affected by his father's generosity. In glowing terms he has declared that Sir Robert's benevolence was only equalled by his patriotism; and, transferring his gratitude from the benefactor to the time which made the benefaction possible, he has given so delightful a picture of the early Georgian period that few modern readers can restrain a sigh that they too did not live in that golden age.

The government of England, at the time when Sir Robert provided for his family out of the public funds, was an oligarchy pure and simple. It remained so till the accession of the third George. The great Whig houses had silenced the king and muzzled the people; to the victors belonged the spoils, and the successful party, uncriticised and unchecked, gorged itself right merrily with the national wealth. No official appointment, from a secretaryship at state to a commission in the army, could be obtained save by political influence; and thus any member of one of the great Whig families found the road to fortune, if not fame, a very path of primroses. But beyond the charmed circle lay a vast crowd of aspirants of whom the aristocratic memoir writers reck but little; unfortunates who, though sometimes of good family were never of good estate, and who strove hard to obtain by trickery or persistence some share in the loaves and fishes. The two great

novelists of the time, Fielding and Smollett, were both of them members of this political half-world. Like poor relations at some pompous family gathering, they eyed the self-satisfied complacency of the ruling clique with snarling derision. And from the countless political allusions scattered through their works we can reconstruct for ourselves the joys and sorrows of this humble but interesting section of the political life of the eighteenth century.

The leading ministers, excepting Sir Robert Walpole and the Duke of Newcastle, who both loved the details of jobbery, were far too busy to pay attention to each individual place-hunter. Hence came into being a new creation, the patronage-monger, on whose "recommendations" the Prime Minister agreed to act. To Fielding and Smollett this person is the pivot of the whole political system, and throughout their works he always appears under the title of the *great man*. But the number of *great men* was small, and their high station rendered them generally unapproachable by the vulgar. The result was seen in the birth of a horde of agents who engaged, directly or indirectly, to introduce applicants to the great man's notice. The political world, according to Fielding and Smollett, is thus organized in a curious hierarchy of ascending influence. "Perhaps," says Smollett's Tom Bowling to his nephew Roderick Random, "I may have interest enough to procure you a warrant appointing you surgeon's mate of the ship to which I shall belong; for the beadle of the Admiralty is my good friend, and he and one of the under clerks are sworn brothers, and that under clerk has a good deal to say with one of the upper clerks, who is very well known to the under

secretary, who, on his recommendation, I hope will recommend my affair to the first secretary, and he again will speak to one of the lords in my behalf." Tom Bowling is described as possessed of a child-like faith in the honesty of human promises; for, as Fielding and Smollett point out, the *little great man* was in nine cases out of ten a deceiver of the blackest dye. He was wont to make a respectable income by falsely engaging to forward applications to the right quarter. When Lieutenant Booth, in Fielding's *Amelia*, wants to be put back on the active list, he begins operations by slipping a bank-note for £50 into the hand of a war-office clerk. The rogue might just as well have promised to procure Booth's election as Pope of Rome; yet, so accustomed was he to make profit from his political pretensions, that he took poor Booth's offering "not as a gudgeon doth a bait, but as a pike receives a poor gudgeon into its maw."

Even if our office-seeker at last obtained access to the great man, the hardest part of his task was yet to come. With light heart and cheery mien he sets out for the great man's house. At the very threshold he finds a new and unexpected obstacle. The great man's porter, like Peter at the gate of Heaven, bars the way to bliss. Fielding, in an address to Sir Robert Walpole, wittily describes the humours of this dreaded Cerberus:

*Great sir, as on each levée day
I still attend you, still you say
"I'm busy now, to-morrow come!"
So says your porter, and dare I
Give such a man as that the lie?*

The great man's porter has by years of practice acquired an unerring insight into the character of his master's visitors. According to Fielding he is a kind of thermometer by which one may discover the warmth or coldness of his master's friendship. As the great man has different greetings for the rich, the doubtful, and the poor, so has the porter. "To some he bows with respect, to others with a smile,

to some he bows more, to others less low. Some he just lets in, others he just shuts out; and in all this they so well correspond, that one would be inclined to think that the great man and his porter had compared their lists together, and, like two actors concerned to act different parts in the same scene, had rehearsed their parts privately together before they ventured to perform in public." In any case, all must pay toll to the porter before they can gain admittance. When Roderick Random comes by special appointment to breakfast with Lord Strutwell, the porter places himself before the door, "like a soldier in a breach." On which, says Roderick, "I recollected myself all of a sudden, and slipping a crown into his hand, begged as a favour that he would inquire whether my lord was up. The grim janitor relented at the touch of my money, which he took with the indifference of a tax-gatherer, and showed me into a parlour." Even then fresh toll had to be paid to footmen and valets before the applicant actually found his way to the holy of holies, the great man's private room. And now comes the unkindest cut of all. The great man himself merely turns out to be the robber who takes all that is left! Not that he ever refuses the applicant point-blank; he is too well-bred for that. He prefers to keep the victim hanging on till, rendered desperate by evasion and delay, he vanishes again into outer darkness. "I have what I think good news for you, sir," says a certain peer, on whose influence he bases great hopes, to Lieutenant Booth. "I have mentioned your affair . . . and I have no doubt of my success." Cadwalader Crabtree, the cynical humourist in *Peregrine Pickle*, mentions a great man who amused him with the promise of a commission in the army for seven years. Parson Adams, in return for some election work was promised a benefice by Sir Thomas Booby; "And I believe," he says (honest man) "I should have had it, but an accident

happened, which was that my lady had promised it before unknown to him. . . . Since that time Sir Thomas, poor man, had always so much business, that he never could find leisure to see me!" Lord Strutwell, Roderick Random's patron, "whose interest at court is so low, that he could scarce provide for a superannuated footman once a year in the customs, or excise," has crowds of applicants at his levée every morning. The noble lord to whom Peregrine Pickle entrusts his interests, after keeping him in attendance for many a long day, ends by swindling him out of £10,000, in return for which Peregrine receives exactly nothing. No wonder that middle-class folk who wished for state appointments raged in impotent fury against the chicanery and obstruction that beset their path; or that Fielding, after describing Jonathan Wild's career as liar, thief, seducer, traitor, and assassin, can think of no better climax than to call him "a perfect great man!"

The greater part of the political allusions in Fielding and Smollett deal with the woes of the unhappy place-hunter; we can also glean from them a pretty shrewd idea of the popular theory of politics. It was an accepted dogma that membership of the House of Commons was to all intents and purposes a matter of private arrangement between the great territorial magnates. On one occasion Peregrine Pickle, not content with lending his money to bankrupt peers in London, thinks to strengthen his pretensions by putting himself up for parliament as a Government candidate. He hurries down to a country borough, sets the public-house taps a-flow, distributes bank-notes among the more sordid voters, and makes love to the matrons with such success that things soon begin to go in his favour. But his opponent happens to belong to a great family which has represented the borough for many generations. The latter is furious at the thought of being ousted by a stranger; and,

at last, he writes a letter to the Prime Minister, offering "to compromise the affair, by giving up two members in another place, provided that the opposition should cease in his own corporation." The proposal is at once accepted, and Peregrine is forced to withdraw on the very eve of victory.

But perhaps the most singular feature at parliamentary elections is the utter absence of a programme. Parliamentary reform, social reform, local government reform, and all the crowd of proposals which pad a modern candidate's address were entirely undreamed of. The Englishman of the middle years of the eighteenth century was born and lived in a fixed political and social groove, wherein none had the audacity to propose a change. What touched him were a few broad general principles, such as the antagonism between the squire and the merchant, between the churchman and the dissenter, between the Jacobite and the Hanoverian. Take for instance the speeches in the election scene in Smollett's *Sir Lancelot Greaves*. First appears Sir Valentine Quickset, a Tory foxhunter. He begins by informing the electors that he has lived among them time out of mind, and possesses an income "of vive thousand clear" which he spends at home in old English hospitality. "I am, thank God," he continues, "a vree-born, true-hearted Englishman, and a loyal though unworthy son of the Church. . . . I hate all vorreigners, and vorreign measures [this was a characteristic cut at the German sympathies of the court], whereby this poor nation is broken-backed with a dismal load of debt, and the taxes rise so high that the poor cannot get bread. Gentlemen, vreeholders of this here county, I value no minister a vig's end, d'y'e see; if you will vavour me with your votes and interest I'll engage one half of my estate that I never cry yea to your shillings in the pound [a reference to the land-tax, a Whig invention], but will cross

the ministry in everything as in duty bound, and as becomes an honest vree-holder in the ould interest." The Whig candidate, Mr. Isaac Vanderpelft, a Jewish contractor and financial agent, begins with the satisfactory announcement that he has "fourscore thousand pounds in his pocket, acquired by commerce, the support of the nation!" He describes himself as a faithful subject to his majesty King George, sincerely attached to the Protestant succession, in detestation of a popish, an abjured, and an outlawed Pretender. And he ends by declaring his readiness to expend his substance and his blood in defence of the glorious Revolution of 1689.

Fielding's Squire Western is the incarnation of old English tradition. "I had rather be anything," says he, "than a courtier, and a Presbyterian, and a Hanoverian as some people are." He looks with suspicion on Whig finance. Rather than portion his daughter if she marries Tom Jones, he will give his estate to the sinking fund, that it may be sent to Hanover to corrupt the nation with. He prophesies the day when Roundheads and Hanover rats will be driven forth. "The times are a-coming," he roars, "that we shall make fools of them and every man shall enjoy his own. I hope to see it before the rats have eat up all our corn and left us nothing but turnips to feed on." Turnips, be it known, were introduced into England by a Whig statesman, Lord Townshend.

It is the same with Lawyer Ferret, a Tory henchman in *Sir Lancelot Greaves*. In the disguise of a cheap-jack he tramps the country, and delivers addresses in which praise of his wares is cleverly mixed up with abuse of a "Germanised" ministry. "Take notice," says he, "I don't address you in the style of a mountebank or high German doctor; and yet the country is full of mountebanks, empirics and quacks. . . . We have quacks in Government, High German

quacks that have blistered, sweated, bled and purged the nation into an atrophy. Like the people of Nineveh, she can hardly tell her right hand from her left; but as a changeling is dazzled by an *ignis fatuus*, a Will-o'-the-Wisp, that leads her astray through Westphalian bogs and deserts, and will one day break her neck over some barren rocks, or leave her sticking in some Hanoverian pit or quagmire."

The Tories could accuse the Whig Government of making English policy subservient to Hanoverian interests. But the Whigs countered with tremendous force by fastening on their opponents the charge of Jacobitism. Smollett, as became a doughty Scot, felt a secret admiration for the ill-fated heroes of 1745. Fielding, however, was a strong supporter of the Hanoverian line; and from him we get a good idea of the Hanoverian standpoint. England had no affection for King George himself, but it rightly valued the principles he represented. The Hanoverian monarchy meant good trade and a free press. It gave toleration to all sects except the Roman Catholic. It was universally believed that if the Pretender came to the throne he would repudiate the national debt; and thus all the fund-holders were Hanoverians to a man. Who, moreover, asks Fielding, would have gained by a Jacobite restoration? Such an enterprise must depend for its success on the help of Frenchmen and Scotch Highlanders. They therefore would have the first claim on a restored Pretender's liberality. A few country squires toasted the king over the water; and from a tract of Fielding's, *De Arte Jacobitica*, it would seem that in certain cultured circles it was thought correct to speak reverently of that blessed martyr King Charles the First. But among both the aristocracy and the middle classes in general the memory of the Stuarts had become the shadow of a shade. The rebellion of 1745 aroused no enthusiasm out of Scotland. With

the lower orders the Pretender's cause was hopeless. To begin with he was a Frenchman. In Smollett's play, *The Jack Tars of Old England*, occurs a delightful picture of the true-born Briton's idea of his French brother. "Eh bien! Monsieur, que souhaitez-il?" says Lieutenant Champignon, on meeting Mr. Midshipman Haulyard. "Anan! mounseer! sweat ye!" answers the latter. "I believe if we come alongside of you, we'll make you all sweat!" Frenchmen were supposed to be wizen-faced, high-shouldered, and undersized. They never drank beer; they had no prize-fights; they were perpetually bowing, seraping, pirouetting, and paying compliments; they were ridiculously over-dressed; they painted their faces; they cheated at cards; they made love to every woman they met. In his *Travels through France and Italy* Smollett delivers a diatribe against the French nation, in which all their defects are enumerated in extraordinary detail. "A French friend," he concludes, "tires out your patience with long visits; and far from taking the most palpable hints to withdraw, when he perceives you uneasy, he observes you are low-spirited, and therefore declares he will keep you company. This perseverance shows that he must either be void of all penetration, or that his disposition must be truly diabolical. Rather than be tormented with such a fiend, a man had better turn him out of doors, even though at the hazard of being run through the body." How could a creature like this hope to become king of England?

But what really ruined the Pretender's chances with the English people was the fact that he was a Roman Catholic. This point is well brought out by Fielding. The one undoubted characteristic of popular English sentiment at this time was its deep hatred of "popery." In *The True Patriot*, a Whig journal founded by Fielding, occurs a diary supposed to be written after a Jacobite victory.

It well expresses the popular idea as to the results of such a catastrophe, and contains passages like the following.

1746. *January 3*.—Queen Anne's statue in St. Paul's churchyard taken away, and a large crucifix erected in its room.

January 12.—Being the first Sunday after Epiphany, Father Macdagger, the royal confessor, preached at St. James's; sworn afterwards of the privy council.

February 3.—Father Poignardini, a Jesuit, made privy seal.

February 13.—Four heretics burnt in Smithfield. Mr. Machenly attended them, assisted on this extraordinary occasion by Father O'Blaze, the Dominican.

February 19.—Rumours of a plot. More heretics committed. Father Macdagger made president of Magdalen College, Oxford.

February 21.—The deanery of Christ Church given to Father Poignardini, and the bishoprics of Winchester and Ely to the general of the Jesuit's order resident in Italy.

March 7.—The Pope's nuncio makes his public entry; met at the Royal Exchange by my Lord Mayor (a Frenchman) with the aldermen, who have all the honour to kiss his toe; proceeds to Paul's churchyard; met there by Father O'Blaze, who invites him, in the name of the new vicar-general, and his doctors, to a *combustio hereticorum*, just then going to be celebrated. His eminence accepts the offer kindly, and attends them to Smithfield.

Nothing like the universal and minute interest in contemporary politics which marks our own day was then possible. The vast majority of the population lived all their lives in the provinces. Newspapers were few and far between. News took a long time to make its way from London. Country folk took a deep interest in the price of cattle, in the doings of the local gentry, in the occasional festivities of the county town. A general election meant free beer for all, and an addition to their incomes for the very limited number of voters on the register. But about the deeds and misdeeds of ministers and "parliament-men" the mass of the people cared little. Even in London itself accurate political in-

formation was the privilege of the few. The House of Commons bitterly resented any regular attempt to report its debates, and the accounts thereof which found their way to the general public were due mainly to the imaginative talent of a few hack-writers. When Captain Booth is arrested for debt he meets one of these gentlemen in Mr. Bondum's sponging-house. The latter seems to have been a man of very great genius, and his "parliament speeches" greatly impressed the bailiff. "He reads them to us sometimes over a bowl of punch. To be sure it is as if one was in the parliament-house,—it is about liberty and freedom, and about the constitution of England." Captain Booth subsequently has an interview with this great author who explains his art with ludicrous candour. "A sheet is a sheet with the booksellers," says he, "and whether it be in prose or verse they make no difference. . . . Rhymes are difficult things; they are stubborn things, sir. I have been sometimes longer in tagging a couplet than I have been in writing a speech on the side of the opposition which hath been read with great applause all over the kingdom." Booth expresses his astonishment, and says he thought that the speeches published in the magazines had been made by the members themselves. Nothing of the sort! "The best," cries the indignant author, "are all the productions of my own pen!"

Knowledge of foreign politics was rigidly confined to a few special circles; any ordinary person who essayed the subject was marked down as a standing butt for the derision of his fellows. In Fielding's play, *The Coffee-house Politician*, a specimen of the class is pre-ented under the name of Mr. Politic. He assiduously reads all the newspapers, from which he culls such precious items as the following from *The Lying Post*: "Berlin, January 20th. We hear daily murmurs here concerning certain measures taken by a certain Northern potentate;

but cannot certainly learn either who that potentate is, or what are the measures which he hath taken; meantime we are well assured that time will bring them all to light." Mr. Politic cannot sleep at night owing to vague statements in similar prints regarding the preparations of the Turks. "Suppose we should see Turkish galleys in the Channel! We may feel them in the midst of our security. Troy was taken in its sleep, and so may we!" On another occasion he discusses the affairs of Italy with his friend Mr. Dabble, but without arriving at any very definite result, for while one of them maintains that Tuscany is a country, the other is as sure that it is a town.

English society at that time was aristocratic to the core. The sentiment of local loyalty was very strong; and the tenants of the eighteenth century magnate voted Whig or Tory according to his directions, as readily as the tenants of the fifteenth century magnate had risen at their lord's bidding in the name of Lancaster or York. But Fielding and Smollett write as the bitter champions of a dissatisfied section, conscious of their ability, yet unable to show it for want of influence. They picture the governing aristocracy as steeped in cynicism and corruption, as careless of the destinies of the country, and intent solely on the diversion of its revenues into their own pockets. In *Amelia* (written in 1751 during the Pelham ministry) Doctor Harrison is represented as paying a visit to a certain Whig Peer, a member of the Government. The conversation happens to turn upon the state of England. His lordship declares that, in these days, it is impossible to govern save by corruption. Dr. Harrison answers that, if this be so, the fate of England is sealed. To his astonishment the peer expresses no surprise. The state, he says, like the natural body has its seasons of youth, manhood, and decay. England has now reached the last of these periods; and "such indeed is

its misery and wretchedness, that it resembles a man in the last decrepit stage of life, who looks with unconcern at his approaching dissolution." The doctor is horrified, and wonders how any patriot can endure to live. But this is by no means his lordship's opinion. "Why, hang myself, Doctor!" he retorts. "Would it not be wiser, think you, to make the best of your time, and the most you can in such a nation?"

In *Humphrey Clinker*, published in 1770, but seemingly written about 1766, we get Smollett's own opinion of the great. During the Rockingham ministry Squire Bramble attends a levée at St. James's, and a reception at the Duke of Newcastle's, then Privy Seal. Not a single statesman of the time is mentioned save in terms of contempt or vituperation. To despise the Duke of Newcastle, whose ignorance, stupidity, and loquacity had yet not prevented his being a revered Whig leader for thirty years, was easy. But Lord Chatham, one of the noblest characters in English history, is spoken of as the great political bully and the grand pensionary. Charles Townshend is described as having more brains than the rest of the administration put together. "But it must be owned," says one of the characters, through whom Smollett himself is speaking, "he wants courage There is no faith to be given to his assertions and no trust to be put in his promises. However, to give the devil his due, he is very good-natured; and even friendly when close urged in the way of solicitation. As for principle, that's out of the question." And Smollett's criticism is not confined to members of one political faction. His view is that of his favourite character, Matthew Bramble, who, when canvassed at an election, answers that both candidates are of a piece with one another, and

that he would be a traitor to his country if he voted for either.

The writings of Fielding and Smollett cover a period of Whig supremacy extending from the accession of Walpole to the dismissal of Newcastle by George the Third. They show that the Whigs had not been able to escape the bad effects which a too long duration of power must have on any party. During their supremacy they had assiduously fostered parliamentary corruption, sinecure offices, and administrative nepotism. The party itself had degenerated into a gang of self-seeking place-hunters. It had no principles and no head. The elder Pitt, whose adhesion had given it an enormous accession of credit during the latter years of George the Second, had always gloried in his contempt for party distinctions. His allegiance was to England, not to the Whigs. With the accession of a strong-willed and popular sovereign in the person of George the Third, the whole fabric so carefully built up by the Whig magnates collapsed. "This trade of politics is a rascally business," said the new king, "it is a trade for a scoundrel, not for a gentleman." "He had only himself to thank," remarks a modern Whig writer. So far from this being the case, one is astonished that George did not take greater advantage of his position. He no sooner held up his hand, than half the Whig party rushed over to his side, struggling with one another as to who should be first in the race of servitude. Henry Fox, who had made one fortune by plundering his country in the name of the Whig houses under George the Second, was only too glad to make another by plundering it in the name of the crown under George the Third. The Whig party was doomed, and its leaders had prepared the way for their own downfall.

VINCENT VOITURE.

WE live too quickly in the nineteenth century to have time to read or appreciate anything that is not of the shortest. It is the age of hand-books where our fathers would have had elaborate treatises, of the short story, the short opera, and of short cuts in general to knowledge or amusement. The three-volume novel sounds as if it might be an exception; but then most novels of this class, deprived of their padding and large type, would pack comfortably into one volume; and, to put a literary problem, how many three-volume novels would it take to make a *Tom Jones* or a *Pamela*? The combatants in a modern Battle of the Books would consist almost entirely of light horse, for that mysterious person the "general reader" scorns anything but the lightest of light literature. No apology then should be needed for recommending to an age that delights in trifles the works of one of the greatest triflers that ever politely smothered a yawn, the great French wit and letter-writer of the seventeenth century, Vincent Voiture. Any one who can appreciate a jest, admire a skilfully turned compliment, laugh at a practical joke, or be amused by mere trifling for trifling's sake, will find all these in the letters and poems of this ingenious gentleman who for nearly thirty years was the life and soul of the first and greatest of French salons, the Hôtel Rambouillet. Voiture may be taken as an excellent instance of the trifler by profession, who lives but to please himself first, and then his fellows, with as much regard for posterity as for the victims of his practical jokes. Save for a few occasional poems and one single letter, nothing of his was printed during his lifetime. Indeed,

had it not been for the care of a nephew, Martin Pinchène, who, after his uncle's death, collected for publication his letters and poems which were scattered about in the possession of most of the wits of the day, Voiture would be a name and nothing more, and the world would have lost a correspondence, extending over some thirty years, which is invaluable to the student of French literature and Parisian, that is to say French, society during the first half of the seventeenth century.

The future hero of the Hôtel Rambouillet was born at Amiens in 1598, and was introduced early in life to fashionable society, his father being a jovial, wine-selling, card-playing bourgeois (he has given his name to a particular hand at piquet long known as *le carré de Voiture*) who followed the court in its peregrinations, his company being tolerated by the younger courtiers in return for the money he lent them. On his father's opening a wineshop in Paris, Vincent was sent to the colleges of Calvi and Boncour, at the latter of which he numbered amongst his school-fellows Claude Count d'Avaux, who in later years stood godfather to him on his introduction to polite society. He commenced poet (to use an old-fashioned but serviceable phrase) early in life, his first composition, some lines "*Sur le retour d'Astrée*," being written at the age of fourteen; these he followed up two years later with some complimentary verses addressed to Monsieur, that is to say the King's brother, Gaston Duke of Orleans. We next find him at the University of Orleans, where he did not trouble himself with the study of law, but, a far more important matter, fought his first duel with "a certain cunning Norman who cut his fingers for him."

In 1625 he entered the service of the Duke of Orleans as gentleman-usher, a post from which he was soon promoted to the more important duty of introducing the ambassadors from other courts to the Duke, for Gaston was perpetually intriguing. Voiture owed this appointment not so much to his eulogistic verses, as to the influence of his old school-fellow the Count d'Avaux, who moreover did him a still greater kindness by introducing him to a certain Madame Saintot, one of the wits and toasts of the period, and the greatest admirer Voiture found throughout his career.

It was this lady who inspired the first of his compositions to attract any notice, some stanzas (which a learned commentator has justly apologised for as being "somewhat free") celebrating a carriage-accident which happened to the poet and the lady in question; and a letter which he sent her with a copy of Ariosto's *Orlando Furioso*. It was the latter of these, the only letter Voiture ever printed, which founded his reputation. A thousand copies were struck off in one night and were soon in the hands of all Paris.

But he had yet to be introduced to the inner circle of polite society, the Hôtel Rambouillet. It was here that Catherine de Vivonne-Pisani, who became the wife of Charles d'Angennes, Marquis de Rambouillet, disgusted with the licentiousness that prevailed at the Louvre, founded in 1608 the great salon which did more even than Richelieu's Academy to form the French language. Malherbe, "the father of French poetry," according to the purists; Balzac, who may with equal justice be termed the father of French prose, though some would claim this title for Voiture; Corneille; Chapelain, author of *La Pucelle*; Godeau, Bishop of Grasse, like Voiture more witty than tall, and known as "Princess Julie's dwarf;" Mademoiselle de Bourbon, afterwards Duchesse de Longueville, with whom Monsieur Victor Cousin fell desperately in love

nearly two centuries after her death; Madeleine de Scudéri who wrote *Le Grand Cyrus*, and drew up the famous *Carte de Tendre*; Julie d'Angennes, daughter of the hostess, *matre pulchra filia pulchrior*; Angélique Paulet known from her tawny hair as "the Lioness," to say nothing of a host of lesser stars, — in short every one who had a name ready-made or had made themselves a name, assembled daily in the famous blue chamber, to be admitted to which was to be acknowledged a wit. In this galaxy of talent the wine-merchant's son was destined to shine supreme, even eclipsing the mighty Chapelain whose masterpiece took thirty years a-making, and who deserves to be remembered if only for his inimitable self-conceit. It was Chapelain who, being asked by those in authority to draw up a list of people whose literary works might be considered to have entitled them to pensions, headed it in all seriousness with a round sum "to Monsieur Chapelain, the greatest and most sound-minded French poet that has ever been."

At the Hôtel Rambouillet the French language was perpetually being tried, criticised, and improved, and all kinds of literary frivolities were elaborated. To quote a few instances: we have a serious discussion as to whether the word *car* should be allowed to exist or be banished from the language, a subject on which Voiture wrote one of the best-known of his letters; we find Balzac and Voiture solemnly threshing out the important question whether *muscardins* or *muscadins* is the correct expression; and then there is a grave debate held on the thesis propounded by the oracle of the assembly, Mademoiselle de Scudéri, "Which is the unhappier, a jealous lover, a despised lover, a lover separated from his mistress, or a lover who has lost the object of his passion?"

Voiture owed his introduction to this select circle to a Monsieur de Chaudebonne who, meeting him one day and being charmed with his conversation addressed him thus: "Sir,

you are too gallant a man to remain among the bourgeois ; I must rescue you from them." It may here be noted that throughout his life Voiture, in spite of the noble *de* which he prefixed to his surname, had to put up with allusions to his parentage. Indeed he felt his father's connection with trade so deeply that he abhorred the sight and taste of wine, a peculiarity which gave rise to a somewhat severe epigram on him as the unworthy son of a father who was always equally ready to sell wine, or, in default of that, to drink it ; an attack which he answered in a charming sonnet giving his reasons for being a water-drinker. On another occasion, having pronounced a witticism that was thought unworthy of him, he was brusquely addressed by a lady whom he had been unfortunate enough to offend : "That's very bad, try another tap (*Percez nous en d'un autre*)." However in the present instance Voiture swallowed the somewhat offensive tone of Monsieur de Chaudebonne's compliment, and was duly presented to the "incomparable Arthenice," the latter name being an anagram constructed by Malherbe out of the Christian name, Catherine, of Madame de Rambouillet. Voiture did not forget to whom he owed his introduction, as we see from a curious expression in one of his letters : "Since Monsieur de Chaudebonne aided by Madame de Rambouillet made a new man of me (*m'a réengendré*) I have changed completely in mind." It was not long before he became the centre of attraction, a kind of Master of the Ceremonies to the blue chamber. Living but a few streets off and passing every evening from eight to ten at the hotel, the neat, dapper little man with his feminine features and ironical smile ("So that you would have thought that he was laughing at the people with whom he talked.") was the life and soul of the assembly and, a privileged jester, could do almost anything he liked. On one occasion he introduced two

performing bears, which he borrowed from a man in the street, into Madame de Rambouillet's bedroom, and left them there with the result that the poor lady was nearly frightened to death, although, as the chronicler of the day, Tallemant des Réaux, naïvely remarks, "It was likely to cure her of the fever if she happened to be suffering from it." But Madame de Rambouillet had her revenge. Voiture had written a sonnet of which he was particularly proud ; his hostess, unknown to him, had it printed and carefully bound up in an old collection of poems which was left open on the table to catch Voiture's eye, with the result that the bewildered poet, having read it, was forced to come to the conclusion that he had been guilty of a scandalous, though unconscious plagiarism. To quote one more instance of these frivolities : Julie d'Angennes having expressed her admiration of Gustavus Adolphus, Voiture sent three of his friends dressed up as Swedes, to present her with a portrait of the king in question, together with a letter of grandiloquent compliments, signed "Your very devoted servant, Gustavus Adolphus."

But this position of jester-in-chief, for which he was so eminently suited, was soon to be laid aside. Gaston, having quarrelled with Richelieu, betook himself in 1629 to Lorraine, and Voiture, as in duty bound, followed his patron. His fame preceded him, and he was received with enthusiasm by the court of Lorraine. But Voiture was bored, as indeed he always was when away from his beloved Paris, and took no pains to conceal the fact. To the circle collected at the Hôtel Rambouillet his absence was compensated for by his letters. It is from this date that they begin, a long series of the most courtly compliments imaginable when written to women, and of the most delicate and palatable flattery when written to men, interspersed with extremely vivid pictures, or rather miniatures, of the country through

which he passed, and sparkling with puns and sly allusions, so that altogether a letter from Voiture was a rare treasure, and was graciously passed round by its fortunate possessor. It has been very truly remarked that the letters of Voiture and Balzac were to Parisian society of this period very much what newspapers are to us; Balzac's letters corresponding to the staid and (it must be admitted) somewhat dull leading articles, while Voiture is rather "Our Own Correspondent," a chartered libertine who may spread *canards*, crack jokes, and play the fool at his own free will.

His first sentence of banishment was not of long duration. During a temporary reconciliation between the Duke of Orleans and Richelieu in 1630, Voiture returned to Paris, only to find the city devastated by the plague, the society at the Hôtel Rambouillet broken up, and, his patron getting into trouble again within a few months, to be, with the rest of the Duke's followers, declared guilty of high treason. There was nothing to be done except to join Gaston's army in the provinces. This kind of existence "the pitiable Voiture," as he styles himself, did not find at all to his taste. "I have marched," he writes, with pardonable exaggeration, "for a fortnight from morning to evening without a halt. I have come across places in which the oldest inhabitants do not remember to have ever seen a bed. . . . But I may say that there is no bolder soldier in the army than myself. I have however, as yet, carried off neither wife nor maid, and have done no more than set fire to two or three houses."

In spite of this extraordinary instance of courage, Voiture felt like a fish out of water, and gladly accepted in 1631 the post of ambassador to the Duke of Orleans at Madrid.

He seems, at the court of Spain, to have occupied himself less in promoting his patron's interests than in de-

voting himself to society and the study of Spanish literature, in the latter of which occupations he won some considerable success, some verses of his written in Spanish being attributed to Lope de Vega. His chief correspondent at this time was Mademoiselle Paulet, who kept him posted up in the latest news and scandal of Paris. The charm of Madrid soon wore off, and his letters, written during his two years' sojourn in that capital, are full of allusions to his longing for Paris. For instance, we find him writing: "Many thanks for the Psalm. But why do you send me in my present plight such melancholy things! What better paraphrase could there be of the *Miserere* than myself!" In due time his successor was appointed, and Voiture was free to return to his friends, which he proceeded to do in a very characteristic manner by way of Andalusia and Africa, after taking farewell of "Donna Antonia, Donna Inez, Donna Isabelina, Donna Guzman," and many others in whose honour he had written complimentary verses, and with whom he had conjugated (on paper) the verb "to love." But Voiture had the knack of pleasing men as well as women, as may be seen from the farewell words of the Count de Olivares, requesting that Voiture would write to him, "For even if it be not of business matters, your letters are sure to be amusing."

Starting from Madrid he strolled aimlessly rather than travelled through Andalusia, going out of his path, he writes, "To visit the spot where Cardenio and Don Quixote met, and to dine in the inn where Dorothea's adventures came to an end." Having arrived at Gibraltar, he crossed over to Ceuta, his chief object being, so one suspects, to have an opportunity of writing a letter to *La Lionne* on her African "relations" as he terms them. His words are:

Yesterday I cut your initials on a rock which nearly reaches the stars, and from which seven kingdoms can be seen, and tomorrow I am going to send a challenge to

the Moors of Morocco, offering to maintain that Africa has never produced anything more rare or cruel than you. And then, Mademoiselle, I shall have nothing further to do except to visit your relations, as I wish to talk with them about this contemplated marriage which made such a stir some time back. I wish to get their consent, so that there may be no further obstacle. From what I'm told they are by no means an affable set of people....They are selling some in this place that are extremely pretty. I have decided to send you half-a-dozen instead of the Spanish gloves I promised you, for I know that you will value them more, and besides, they are cheaper.

This latter promise he actually fulfilled by sending the Lioness some small clay lions, accompanied by a mock-heroic letter signed "Leonard, Governor of the Lions of the King of Morocco."

Making his way to Lisbon, he was compelled to wait some time for a ship, and finally embarked in an English vessel, the captain of which had assured him that rather than be captured by the pirates who infested the coast, he would blow up his ship. "What a splendid expedient!" he writes plaintively. "I might as well embark with an Anabaptist." In spite of this threat Voiture chose this particular ship, because, as the cargo consisted of nothing but sugar, "If no accident happens I shall arrive preserved in sugar," an allusion to a remark of Mademoiselle de Bourbon's that Voiture, who was extremely fond of sweet things, ought to be "candied." "And," he goes on, "if I happen to be wrecked, it will at least be some consolation to be drowned in water that is not salt (*eau douce*)."

However in spite of possible shipwreck and probable pirates, he arrived safely in London, November 1st, 1633, where, as we learn later from a letter to a certain "Monsieur Gourdon," (Gordon), captain of a company of the Scottish Guard then in the service of the King of France, he was shown the Tower, with more lions, the only thing that seems to have made any impres-

sion on him. This same letter contains a eulogy in his most complimentary style of the Countess of Carlisle, of whom he declares, "Nothing can be said of her except that she is the best of all bad things and the pleasantest poison that nature ever made"; a remark that is a good instance of the *guindé* or strained style into which a wholesale dealer in extravagant compliments is bound to occasionally lapse, and which is so mercilessly parodied by Molière in *Les Femmes Savantes* and *Les Précieuses Ridicules*.

Sailing from Dover he arrived in Paris in 1634, and, his patron being once more reconciled with Richelieu, Voiture was at liberty to take up his old position at the Hôtel Rambouillet. He was welcomed with enthusiasm. Godeau, who had to some extent taken his place as leading comedian in spite of his bishopric, was deposed, and the returned exile resumed the place of honour in the society there assembled, but not, it is sad to relate, in the affections of the Lioness, who showed her claws, and broke with Voiture on account of his somewhat absurd jealousy of his rival. The quarrel was never followed by a complete reconciliation. Save for this, and the prospect of his patron being once more in trouble, fortune smiled on Voiture. He was elected, at the same time as Vaugelas and Balzac, a member of the recently established Academy, but only once attended a meeting, and then characteristically to win a bet. He followed up this success by writing what is in point of style one of the best of his letters, upon the taking of Corbie (an important frontier town just recaptured from the Spanish by the French), a letter to an imaginary correspondent, ostensibly on the political situation, but in reality nothing more nor less than an elaborate eulogy of Richelieu, whom Voiture, tired of his series of banishments from Paris, had determined to conciliate. It hit the mark, and from this time forth Voiture was under the patronage of the great Cardinal whose

pleasure it was to be considered the Mæcenæ of the day. It must be said that there was nothing servile in his relations to his new master; and it may be set down to his credit that, while most of the writers of the period were actually in the pay of some great man or other, Voiture remained independent.

He consoled himself for the unkindness of Angélique Paulet with Madame de Sablé, one of the wittiest and most beautiful guests of Madame de Rambouillet, with whom he carried on a mild flirtation. Indeed, all Voiture's numerous love-passages with various *précieuses* were never anything serious. By most of them he was allowed to do pretty well as he liked, so long as he was amusing; but the slightest step beyond the everyday high-flown compliment, which said so much and meant so little, was not permitted. On one occasion when he ventured to kiss Julie d'Angennes's hand with rather more warmth than courtesy, he received a snubbing which he seems to have taken to heart. It was part of the creed of the *précieuses* (as they delighted to call themselves, for the word had not yet been ridiculed by Molière) that love should be expressed in words only; witness the pitiable case of Monsieur de Montausier, the affianced lover of Julie d'Angennes, who, another Jacob, waited till the lady was over thirty before he was allowed to think of marrying her, passing the interval in collecting the poems contributed to the famous "Guirlande de Julie," an anthology for which the wit of every poet of the day was laid under contribution.

Voiture's chief friends at this time were the Marquis de Pisani (son of Madame de Rambouillet), with whom he collaborated in many a practical joke, and Pierre Costar, like himself the son of a tradesman whose wits had won him a place in polite society. With the latter of these Voiture carried on a correspondence on literary matters in general, and nice points as

to the use of certain French words and expressions in particular, though even in these more serious letters he cannot let slip an opportunity for a joke, deriving *cordonnier*, for instance, from the fact that "they are the people who give us corns (*cors*)."

The letter on the capture of Corbie was the making of Voiture. Thanks to Richelieu's influence, he was sent by the King in 1638 to formally announce to the Grand Duke of Tuscany the birth of an heir to the French Crown. The roads in Italy being infested with brigands, Voiture, on a principle something like that of "set a thief to catch a thief," hit on the extremely statesmanlike idea of getting an escort of brigands to guard him, and writes a comical account of his journey.

I wish, Mademoiselle, you could have seen in a mirror the position in which I was placed. You would then have seen me in the heart of the most terrible mountains in the world, surrounded by about fifteen of the most atrocious villains imaginable. The most innocent of them has at least twenty murders on his conscience. All are as black as the devil, and their hair is so long that it covers half their bodies. Each has two or three scars on his face, a huge musket on his shoulder, and two pistols and a brace of daggers in his belt.

From Genoa we have another amusing letter to Madame de Rambouillet who, as an amateur architect of some skill, had asked for a description of the Valentino, a country mansion near Turin belonging to the Duchess of Savoy.

The Valentino, Madame, since there is a Valentino, is a house situated a quarter of a league from Turin in a meadow on the banks of the Po. On arriving, the first thing you see is,—may I die if I know what is the first thing you see. I rather think it's a flight of steps,—no, it's a colonnade. I'm wrong, it is a flight of steps. On my word I don't know if it's a colonnade or a flight of steps. An hour ago I knew perfectly well which it was, and now my memory has failed me. When I return I will find out for certain, and won't fail to give you an exacter account.

Returning to France by way of Rome, where a case was being tried in which Madame de Rambouillet was interested, he followed the court to Grenoble and thence to his birthplace, Amiens. A courtier's life, however, wearied him, as we see from the following letter to Julie d'Angennes, into whose sympathetic ear most of his troubles were poured at this period.

It sometimes happens that I have to bore myself to death waiting three consecutive hours in the King's room, where I find very little pleasure in the conversation of Messieurs Libero, Compiègne, and twenty others whose names I have forgotten, who assure me that I am very witty and that they have seen my works. To-day I watched his Majesty playing at *hoc* the whole of the afternoon, and don't feel any more cheerful for it. Although I go regularly three days a week fox-hunting, I don't particularly care for it, although there are always a hundred dogs and a hundred horns, which make a horrible noise and half deafen you. In short, Mademoiselle, the pleasures of the greatest prince in the world are no pleasure to me.

In spite of his dislike of a courtier's life we find Voiture following the court to Lyons, Avignon, Narbonne, and Nîmes, from which place he wrote to Chapelain a letter which has justly been held up as an instance of the lowest depths of bad taste:

When I reflect that it is to the most intelligent man of the century, to the man who effected the metamorphosis of the Lioness,¹ to the father of *La Pucelle*, that I am writing, each individual hair on my head stands so erect that you would take me for a hedgehog. But, on the other hand, when I remember that I am addressing the most indulgent of all critics, the excuser of all faults, a dove, a lamb, a sheep, my hair suddenly falls as flat as the feathers of a fowl that has got drenched, and I am not the least bit afraid of you.

¹ An allusion to Chapelain's *Metamorphose d'Angélique en Lionne*, which he sent to Angélique Paulet. Voiture aptly terms him "the excuser of all faults," for, so Tallemant says, Chapelain's invariable answer when asked his opinion was, "That is not to be despised."

Although the "greatest French poet that ever was" may have thoroughly appreciated this instance of the art of sinking, the disinterested reader is tempted to exclaim with honest Gorgibus, "What the devil of a jargon have we here? This is the high style with a vengeance." After the death of Richelieu and of Louis the Thirteenth, Voiture enjoyed the patronage of his old friend Claude d'Avaux and of Cardinal Mazarin. Besides a post in the King's household which he had obtained in 1639, he was made interpreter to the Queen. In the latter capacity he on one occasion embellished the conversation of some foreign envoy with remarks of his own, and, on being remonstrated with, made the very characteristic excuse, "If he doesn't say so, he ought to."

In 1642 Claude d'Avaux, who had become Minister of Finance, or Controller-General as it was then called, made Voiture his head clerk, a post which had no duties attached to it save that of drawing a large salary. But though his income at this period was larger than that of any literary man of his day, he saved little, for Voiture had inherited a love of gambling from his father. It was a kind of indoor exercise to him, as we learn from Tallemant, who remarks, "He indulged with such ardour in this ruling passion that it was necessary for him to don fresh linen at the end of each game." Besides his taste for cards, Voiture was extremely generous. Balzac having occasion to borrow a sum from him, he promptly sent it, accompanied by a scrap of paper, "I, the undersigned, bear witness that I owe Monsieur Balzac the sum of eight hundred crowns, in return for the pleasure he has given me by borrowing four hundred from me." Who could not but admire a friend who did a favour with such a grace!

From 1642 onwards Voiture scarcely left Paris, save for one journey to Péronne, whither he accompanied the Queen of Poland as *maître d'hôtel*,—a journey memorable from the fact that

he was followed by the ever-faithful Madame Saintot, whom the fickle Voiture steadfastly refused to see.

In 1646 another honour was thrust upon him. We find him writing to Costar: "There is at Rome an Academy of certain people who call themselves Humorists, which is as though one should say Originals (*bizarres*), and they have shown their originality by taking it into their heads to elect me a member of their body." He owed this honour to some Italian verses written in the style of Guarini, for Voiture wrote Spanish and Italian with equal ease.

For the last few years of his life, suffering from constant ill-health, he was more "pitiable" than ever, but still possessed enough of his old spirit to fight his last duel by moonlight,¹ in the gardens of the Hôtel Rambouillet, with a certain Chavaroché, the *teterima causa* being, as usual with Voiture, a lady, no other than a younger sister of his fair correspondent Julie d'Angennes. This was but a few months before his death in May, 1648. He died, if we are to believe the somewhat spiteful remark of his old flame the Lioness, "Like the Grand Turk, in the arms of his sultanas." It has been wittily said that one of the cleverest things Voiture ever did was to die just before the Fronde.

The Academy, in spite of Voiture's one solitary visit to their meetings, went into mourning for him, and the Hôtel Rambouillet was inconsolable. Sarrasin wrote a *pompe funèbre*, and two great literary quarrels as to his merits were fought out over his grave. The first was the famous dispute between the Uranistes and Jobelins, partisans respectively of Voiture's sonnet on Uranie and Benserade's on Job. All Paris was divided on this burning question, which gave rise to a whole literature of other sonnets and epigrams. The chief actor in the second quarrel, in which Balzac does not ap-

pear altogether to advantage, was the faithful Costar, who defended his friend's works from the aspersions of a certain Monsieur Paul Thomas, Sieur de Girac. Both disputes are too long and involved for it to be possible to do more than allude to them here.

His works were collected and published by his nephew, Martin Pinchène, in 1650. Voiture, who wrote only for the occasion, putting everything *en viager*, out at a life-interest, to use the extremely happy phrase borrowed by Sainte Beuve from *La Biographie Universelle*, had foreseen this. A few months before his death he had remarked, "You will see that some day there will be people silly enough to hunt out here and there what I have written, and then to get it printed." But he was mistaken in this self-depreciation; for a hundred years, from 1650 to 1750, edition after edition of his works was published. He was translated into Italian and, what is more interesting to us, into English. In 1657 was published *Letters of Affairs, Love, and Courtship, Englished by J. D.* (a certain J. Davies); in 1700, *Familiar and Courtly Letters of Monsieur Voiture*, translated by, among others, Dryden, who seems, however, to be responsible for only one letter, and John Dennis; while in 1735 there is an edition of *The Works of Monsieur Voiture, translated by the most eminent hands*, and prefaced with an address to Miss Martha Blount by a very eminent hand indeed, no less a one than Alexander Pope, who pays our author a very pretty compliment.

Thus wisely careless, innocently gay,
Cheerful he played the Trifle, Life,
away.

* * * * *

The Smiles and Loves had died in Voiture's death
But that for ever in his Lines they
breathe.

Pope, indeed, admired Voiture to such an extent that in his letters to his lady correspondents he took him

¹ He had, when a younger man, fought another duel by torchlight.

for his model, "aped him," as Hallam rather unkindly puts it. It is no fault of Voiture's that these are the most affected and least interesting letters of the correspondence dated from Twickenham. It wanted a writer of the then out-dated "metaphysical school" to appreciate and render the extravagant conceits and word-play of Voiture. Cowley, had his prose been of the same stamp as his verse, could have done it admirably.

Perhaps the most eloquent eulogy passed on Voiture up to 1750 is that of a greater letter-writer, Madame de Sévigné, who, defending him from a charge of obscurity, ended her argument "so much the worse for those who do not understand him." But from 1750 onwards, Voiture was in disgrace, chiefly owing to the criticisms of Voltaire, who never lost an opportunity of saying something spiteful of a writer of whom, if the truth be told, he was jealous, and from whose poetry he was not too proud to borrow. The most striking instance of this jealousy is his reply to a friend who had been rash enough to praise Voiture's simplicity. "You are praising," he writes, "the simplicity of the most forced and affected of styles. Leave such twaddle alone; it is no more natural than is the wax and the rouge on a doll's face."

This was a hard saying from a hard critic, but it had its effect, and Voiture has been relegated to the top shelf. The truth is he was essentially the man of his time, and his time has passed away. The Loves and Graces are out of fashion, the age of gallantry is gone.

In the *Bibliotheca Britannica*, where the reputation of many a writer rests on a single word, Voiture is briefly described as a "pleasing French writer," a description that will be corroborated by all who are acquainted with either his letters or his *vers de société*, the latter of which are of the very lightest of light literature. But he was more than this. In considering his influence in forming the

French language, it must be remembered that his letters were written before the appearance of Pascal's *Lettres Provinciales*, when there was no French prose to speak of. The prose of Montaigne or Amyot was an instrument that was of little use in weaker hands. Voiture gave to French prose the flexibility and grace which it was utterly out of the power of Balzac to give. Where Balzac serves up somewhat solid fare, Voiture gives us whipped cream. Balzac's style is consequently staid and somewhat strained, Voiture's is of the airiest. Though, curiously enough, more addicted to archaisms than Balzac (we find him in a letter to Costar preferring the old form *courre* to *courir*), and with an equal propensity to occasionally lapse into bombast, he is far the pleasanter to read. He may be said to have done for French prose what Dryden did for English, to have first made it a tool that anybody might use.

He is an adept in the art of skating without offence over thin ice. In some of his letters to the ladies of the blue chamber he seems to take a pleasure in showing his correspondents that a very little more and it would be their duty to blush, but it is only fair to say that he invariably pulls up in time. With his letters primarily intended for men only it is different; there the *esprit gaulois* is more evident. And above all he is original; he imitated no one and no one has yet succeeded in imitating him, save perhaps his bitterest critic Voltaire. His remark, in a letter to the Marquis de Pisani, "It has always seemed to me that, from whatever cause one may die, there is something vulgar in being dead (*il y a quelque chose de bas à être mort*)," may alone well have entitled him to a place in the Academy of Originals at Rome. Mademoiselle de Scudéri, in the sixth volume of that stupendous novel *Le Grand Cyrus*, in which most of the members of the Hôtel Rambouillet are described under Greek and Roman

names, has given a very fair appreciation of the merits of Voiture, or Callicrates as he is there called.

He wrote very pleasantly both in prose and verse, and in so polished and uncommon a style that one might almost say that he had invented it. At least I am sure that I have never seen any style which could have been his model, and I think I may say that no one who takes him as a model can hope to succeed in imitating him; for he could make a pleasant letter out of a mere trifle; and, if the Phrygian tale that everything that Midas

touched turned to gold be true, it is still truer that everything that passed through the mind of Callicrates acquired the properties of the diamond, for he could produce something brilliant from the most barren and the most commonplace subjects.

Whether this be extravagant praise or not, all Frenchmen, who are nothing if not polite, should be eternally grateful to Voiture, for, as Talle-mant puts it, "We are indebted to him for having shown us how to say things gracefully."

THE CAPTAIN'S GUN.

LETTER from H. Sewell, midshipman on the S.S. *Britannia*, to his father, the Rev. J. Sewell, Coleby Rectory, Lincolnshire.

QUEBEC,
August 4, 18—.

DEAR FATHER,—We left Liverpool on Thursday week, and are safely arrived after a splendid passage. Our captain's name is Moore, and his people live in the Isle of Man. He is an awfully nice old fellow. The evening of the day we steamed out of the Mersey he brought the ship quite close to Castletown in the Isle of Man, and fired a gun. This was for his daughter who was dying there ashore. An old quarter-master, a Manxman, told me that the captain knew he would never see his daughter again, and promised to fire the gun for good-bye as he passed up towards the North Channel. Tom Baynes said she was very beautiful, and that it was, as he put it in his Manx lingo, "a terrible pity of her." We all thought the same. Tom is such a rum old chap. The passengers were very nice and quiet and some old gentlemen who were playing cards put the cards down, and covered them with a pocket-handkerchief. The old skipper had his eyes on the muzzle of the gun, and when it was fired, gave a long look towards the land, then he moved the telegraph to "Go ahead full." I can tell you I was very sorry for him. Tom fired it. I like the work; the middies are a jolly lot. The grub is not much. You should see our room! How are Mamma and Jenny and baby and the rest? This is just like England.

Your affectionate son, . . .

H. SEWELL.

P.S.—It was consumption. Very like a funeral.

Letter from J. Ellis of Christ Church, Oxford, to T. Wakefield, Reading, Berks.

CASTLETOWN, ISLE OF MAN,
July 26, 18—.

DEAR TOM,—I like this place, though no doubt it is slow. The quiet suits me, and I get through a lot of reading. On the whole I begin to think better of my chances in the schools. I am reading with old B. He is rather *passé*, as you may suppose, in a back settlement like this, but knows his Ethics. Hardly anything occurs to break the monotony of existence. Yesterday, though, I was witness of a remarkable scene. Just about 5 o'clock a large steamer came in quite close to the land, I should say not more than two or three miles off. I noticed that there was a crowd on the little pier, —fishermen, sailors, miscellaneous loafers, together with a great many respectable people. They were evidently waiting for something. I went down and joined them.

"They say she can't live over the day," said one old woman to another. "A sweet craythur too," was the reply. "Thee're often like yander," said the first old body. "Yes, they are, lek it's sayin' in the Bible, eh? 'In the mornin it is green,' what?'" "How is the mawther takin' it?" "Well, how are we all takin' it? when it comes! Our Bill's Sarah Jane—you'll be mindin' Sarah Jane—" and so forth and so forth.

Said a fisherman by my side—"It's lek the Docthors has given her up?" "Up enough," said his chum, changing the quid to the starboard side of his mouth (I hope you recognise my progress in nautical style). Then I heard an old salt say—"She's slowin'"; and almost immediately I saw the steamer lying motionless on the smooth bright sea. "Gettin' the gun ready," said O.S. A minute or so, and the great boom came landwards. The men took off their caps,

as at a funeral; the women wept. It was very touching.

Then the steamer gathered way, and went sturdily on into the golden West, like a strong man that will not be stayed from his purpose.

The people told me that the Captain was much of a favourite in Castletown, that his daughter had been "in a decline," as they phrased it, for some years, and, when he last bade her good-bye he had promised to fire this farewell gun as he passed Castletown. The echoes of the gun along the rock-bound coast were very pathetic; just as if each "beaked promontory" said—"I too," "And I," "And I," till it all sank back into the eternal silence. Don't chaff! It is not Carlylese. If I had meant it for that I should have used the plural.

I wonder what Helen Moore was like; and her father; and what the passengers thought, and how they behaved at the parting of that great gun-sob that broke the stillness of our quiet bay with its message of love.

Well, well, that will do; and if I'm a sentimentalist, I suppose I can't help it. There's lots of it about where it's least expected.

Cricket? No; the island is not up to that. Fishing? Sea-fishing, yes; and good, and capital old fellows to go out with—old Marky Fell and his son Robby, Bob Cannell, Harry Kelly, and plenty more. The fish have such odd names. Come, sir, did you ever hear of callig, or blocken, before? Ignorant? I should think so.

I confess, however, I prefer the lonely rambles over the heather, of which there is a fine display; so of gorse—incomparable. The quartz boulders, too, are a perpetual delight to me. But, if I get upon these matters, I shall drop again into the sentimental.

I am now in the fifth book of the Ethics.

Poor Helen Moore!

Ever yours,

T. ELLIS.

Letter from Miss Elizabeth Moore to her brother, Captain Moore, at Quebec.

CASTLETOWN, July 30, 18—.

DEAR WILLIAM,—All is over. Our darling left us the evening you passed. It was a very quiet evening, warm, but pleasant. We knew that you would be off the bay about five. She asked to have the window open, and we opened it. Never was a more lovely picture than Helen. She lay with the sweetest smile upon her face, and the look of a listening child. Indeed, you would hardly have thought she was seventeen, the expression was so simple and so happy. No doubt people can die happy enough at seventeen; but it must be hard, for it is hard to die in the very bloom of your youth.

As the time went on it seemed as if she wanted to while it away with some sort of amusement before the gun was fired. She played, but very feebly, with her mother's hair, and tried to make some little jokes. We tried, too, not to cry. Then she said: "It's time, isn't it?" and then the gun fired. "That's it!" she said—"Dear, dear father! The *promise*—kept, kept!"—and she straightened herself out like one preparing to sleep, and she did sleep—the sleep that knows no waking.

Her mother bears up as well as you could expect. Friends are very kind; and some of your old sailors have been here every day since, and tears in their eyes—God bless them!

She was buried to-day in Kirk Malew Churchyard. Mr. G. read the service very beautifully.

Emma sends her fond love.

Ever your affectionate sister,

E. MOORE.

Extract from the log of the S.S. *Britannia*, carrying her Majesty's mails.

July 26.—2.20 p.m. Left L'pool. Wind S.S.W.; very light.

5.10. Slowed ship off C—town bay; fired gun as per promise.

Set course W.S.W. to clear the Chickens.

T. E. BROWN.

RÂMCHUNDERJI.

"But the tenth *avatar* of the Lord Vishnu is yet to come."

"Exactly so, pundit-ji," I replied, looking at my watch. "It is yet to come, seeing that time's up. Half-past eight; so not another stroke of work to-day. No, not for twice a thousand rupees!"

A thousand rupees being the sum with which the Government of India rewards what they are pleased to call "high proficiency" in languages, I, having regard to its literature, had chosen Sanskrit as a means of paying certain just debts. To which end the head-master of the district school came to me for two hours every morning, and prosed away over the doings of the Hindoo pantheon until I came to the conclusion that my Lord Vishnu had been rather extravagant in the matter of incarnations.

The pundit, however, to whom would be due a hundred rupees of the thousand if I succeeded, smiled blandly. "The tenth *avatar* will doubtless await his Honour's leisure; the tenth, and last."

"Last!" I echoed with scorn. "How do you know? Some authorities hold there are twenty-four, and upon my soul I don't see why there should not be twenty-four thousand. 'Tis the same old story all through; devils and demigods. *rakshas* and *rishies*, Noah's ark and Excalibur. That sort of thing might go on for ever."

Now pundit Narayan Das was a very learned man. He had taken a Calcutta degree and was accustomed to educate the rising generation on a mixture of the *Rig Veda* and *The Spectator*. So he smiled again, saying in English, "History repeats itself."

Thereupon he left me, and I, going into the veranda with my cigar, came straight upon Râmchunderji and his wife Seeta. At least I think so.

They were the oddest little couple.

He, at a stretch, might have touched a decade of life, she, something more than half such distance of time. That is, taking them by size; in mind and manners, and in their grave, careworn faces, they were centuries old. His sole garment consisted of a large yellow turban twined high into a sort of mitre, with just a tip of burnished silver fringe sprouting from the top; and, as he sat cross-legged against the veranda pillar, a hand resting on each knee, his figure awoke a fleeting memory which, at the time, I failed to catch. Afterwards I remembered the effigies in Indra's celestial court as represented by some Parsee actors I had once seen. Seeta was simply a bundle, owing to her being huddled and cuddled up in a veil ample enough for an ample woman.

"I am Râmchunderji, and this is my wife Seeta," said the boy gravely. "If the Presence pleases, I will beguile time by singing."

"What will you sing?" I asked, preparing to idle away ten minutes comfortably in a lounge-chair which lay convenient.

"I sing what I sing. Give me the *vina*, woman."

The veil gave up such a very large instrument that the smallness of the remaining wife became oppressive. So large indeed was it, that one gourd over-filled the boy's lap, while the other acted as a prop to the high twined turban. Even the connecting bamboo, slender though it was, seemed all too wide for those small fingers on the frets.

"Is the permission of the Presence bestowed?" suggested Râmchunderji with the utmost solemnity.

Twang, twang, twangle! Heavens, what a *vina* and what a voice! I nearly stopped both at the first bar; then patience prevailing, I lay back

and closed my eyes. Twang, twangle ! A sudden difference in the tone made me open them again, only to find the same little bronze image busy in making a perfectly purgatorial noise ; so I resigned myself once more. Palm-trees waving, odorous thickets starred with jasmine, forms, half-mortal, half-divine, stealing through the shadows, the flash of shining swords, the twang of golden bows bent on ten-headed many-handed monsters—Bah ! Pundit Narayan Das, prosing over those epic poems of his, had made me drowsy. "What have you been singing ?" I asked, rousing myself.

Râmchunderji spread his hands thumbs outwards, and the three wrinkles on his high forehead deepened. "God knows ! It is what they sang before the great flood came. The *vina* was theirs, and my turban, and my wife's veil ; the rest was too big altogether, so I gave it away for some bread. When the belly is full of greed the heart hath none left, and the nine-lakh necklace is worth no more than a mouthful. If the Presence could see into my heart now, he would find no greed there."

This delicate allusion to an inward craving produced a four-anna bit from my pocket, and sent Râmchunderji away to the sweetmeat-sellers in order to appease his hunger ; for sweet-stuff is cheap in the East, especially when it is stale. Seeta and the *vina*, mysteriously intertwined beneath the veil, followed duteously behind.

The next day they were back again, and the twang of that infernal instrument broke in on the pundit's impassioned regrets over the heroic days of his favourite poems. "By the by," I interrupted, "can you tell me what that boy is singing ? I can't make out a word, and yet,——". But it was no use bringing fancy to bear on Narayan Das, so we went out to listen. They were sitting under a trellised arch covered with jasmine and roses, and a great Gloire de Dijon had sent a shower of blown petals over Seeta's veil.

"A little knowledge is a dangerous

thing," quoted Narayan Das sentimentously after listening a while. "It is Râmâyâna, the immortal poem your honour reads even now ; but debase, illiterate. You say wrong, boy ! it is thus."

Râmchunderji waited till the pompous periods ceased ; then he shook his head gravely. "We did not sing it so in the days before the great flood came."

His words gave me a curious thrill ; but there is no more matter-of-fact being in the world than a Calcutta Bachelor of Arts ; so the pundit at once began a cross-examination that would have done credit to a Queen's Counsel. "What flood ? who were 'we' ?" These and many other questions put with brutal bluntness met with a patient reply.

It had been a very big flood, somewhere, God knows how far, in the south country. One, two, three years ago ? Oh more than that ! but he could not say how much more. The bard who sang and the woman who carried the *vina* had disappeared, been swept away perhaps. Since then he, Râmchunderji, had wandered over the world filling his stomach and that of his wife Seeta with songs. Their stomachs were not always full ; oh no ! Of late (perhaps because the *vina* was so old) people had not cared to listen, and since the great flood nothing could be got without money. Seeta ? Oh, yes ! she was his wife. They had been married ever so long ; he could not remember the time when they had not been married.

It was Narayan Das's opportunity for shaking his head. These infant marriages were subversive of due education. Here was a boy, who should be in Standard II, doing the compound rules, idling about in ignorance. It struck me, however, that Râmchunderji must be pretty well on to vulgar fractions and rule of three, with himself, Seeta, and the world as the denominators, so I asked him if his heart were still so devoid of greed that another four-anna bit would be

welcome. His face showed a pained surprise. The Presence, he said, must be aware that four annas would fill their stomachs (which were not big) for many days. They had not come for alms, only to make music for the Presence out of gratitude. Thinking that music out of an ill-tuned *vina* was hardly the same thing I forced another four-anna bit on the boy and sent him away.

Nearly a month passed ere I saw him again, though Narayan Das and I used, as the days grew warmer, to sit out in the trellised arch within sight of the road. My knowledge of Sanskrit increased as I read of Râmhunderji's long exile shared by Seeta his wife; of how he killed the beasts in the enchanted forest; how she was reft from him by Râvana the hydra-headed, many-handed monster; and of how finally she was restored to his arms by the help of Hanumân the man-monkey, the child of the wild winds. But though the pundit used to waste many words in pointing out the beauties of a poem which held such hold on the minds of the people that their commonest names were derived from it, I never seemed to get into the spirit of the time as I had done when I listened with closed eyes to the boy's debased, illiterate rendering of the *s'lokas*.

It was after the school-vacation had sent Narayan Das to see his relatives at Benares that the odd little couple turned up again. Râmhunderji's face looked more pinched and careworn than ever, and as he held the *vina* across his knees, Seeta, losing its contours, seemed more than ever inadequate to her veil.

"Perhaps one of the many devils which beset the virtuous has entered into the instrument," he said despondently; "but when I play, folk listen not at all. So greed remaineth in the stomach, and the heart is empty."

I offered him another four-anna bit, and when he demurred at taking it before beguiling the time with music, I laid it on the flat skin top of one

of the gourds, hoping thus to ensure silence.

The wrinkles on his forehead seemed to go right up into his turban, and his voice took a perplexed tone. "It used not to be so. Before the flood Seeta and I had no thought of money; but now——". He began fingering the strings softly and as they thrilled, the four-anna bit vibrated and jiggled in a murmur of money that fitted strangely to the sort of rude chant in which he went on.

Money is in the hands, the head, the heart;
Give! give, give, before we give again;
Money hath ten heads to think out evil-doing;
Money hath twenty hands to mete out pain.
Money! money! money! money!
Money steals the heart's love from our life.
Money I have not—say! art thou hungry, wife?

If anything was possessed of a devil it was that four-anna bit. It buzzed, and hummed, and jiggled infernally, as the boy's finger on the strings struck more firmly.

"I'll tell you what it is, Râmhunderji," said I uneasily, "that *vina* is enough to ruin Orpheus. As you don't care for my money, I'll give you another instrument instead. I have one inside which is easier to play, and more your style in every way."

So I brought out a *ravanastron* such as professional beggars use, a thing with two strings and a gourd covered with snake-skin. To my surprise the boy's face lost its impassive melancholy in palpable anger.

"The Presence does not understand," he said quite hotly. "We do not beg; Seeta and I fill ourselves with songs. That thing whines for money, money, money, like the devil who made it. Rather would I live by *this* than by mine enemy." And as he spoke he struck the snake-skin with his supple fingers till it resounded again. "Yea! thus will I find bread," he went on, "but the *vina*

must find a home first. Therefore I came to the Presence, hearing that he collected such things. Perhaps he will keep it in exchange for one rupee. It is worth one rupee surely."

His wistful look as he handed me the instrument made me feel inclined to offer a hundred; but in good sooth the *vina* was worth five, and I told him so, adding, as I looked at some curious tracery round the gourds, that it appeared to be very old indeed.

"The Presence saith truly; it is very old," echoed Rāmchunderji drearily. "That is why folk will not listen. It is too old; too old to be worth money."

Nevertheless he cheered up at the sight of his rupee; for he would not take more, saying he had every intention of returning to claim the *vina* ere long, and that five rupees would be beyond his hopes of gain.

A fortnight after I came home from my early morning ride by the police-office, which stood outside the native town, close to a brick-stepped tank shaded by *peepul* trees; my object being to check the tally of poisonous snakes brought in for the reward given by Government for their capture. The first time I saw some six or seven hundred deadly serpents ranged in a row with all their heads one way, and all their unwinking eyes apparently fixed on me, I felt queer, and the fact of their being dead did not somehow enter into the equation. But habit inures one, and I walked along the thin grey fringe of certain death spread out on the first step of the tank with an air of stolid business; only stopping before an unusually large specimen to ask the captor, who sate behind awaiting his pence, where he had come across it.

"Six hundred and seventy in all, *Huzoor*," remarked the Deputy Inspector of Police, following me resplendent in silver trappings and white cotton gloves. "That is owing to the floods, and the season, since this is the sixth of *Bhādran* [August] the month

of snakes. Yet the outlay is excessive to the Government, and perhaps with justice the price of small ones, such as these, might be reduced one half."

I looked up, and behind a fringe of diminutive vipers sat Rāmchunderji and the bundle he called Seeta. On his bare right arm he wore a much be-tasselled floss silk-bracelet bound with tinsel.

"I am glad to see the greed is in your heart again," said I, pointing to the ornament.

"The *Rām-rucki* is not bought, but given, as in the days before the flood," replied the boy. "Every one wears the *Rām-rucki* still, every one!"

The Deputy Inspector pulled down the cuff of his uniform hastily, but against the gleam of his white gloves I caught a glimpse of bright colours. The *Rām-rucki*, he explained evasively, was the bracelet of luck given to Rāmchunderji in old days before his search for Seeta, and common, ill-educated people still retained the superstitious custom of binding one on the wrist of each male during the month of *Bhādran*. There was so much deplorable ignorance amongst the uneducated classes, and did the Presence look with favour on the proposal for reducing the rewards? Perhaps it was Rāmchunderji's eager, wistful face hinting at the way promises were kept before the flood, which made me reply that I considered no one but the Viceroy in Council had power to reduce the price of snakes.

Several times after this I found the odd little couple disposed behind their tally of small vipers; then the season of serpents ceased, and one by one the *habitués* of the tank steps dropped off to pursue other professions. The fringe broke into isolated tassels, and finally the worn, ruddy, steps lay bare of all save the flickering light and shade of the leaves above.

November had chilled the welcome cool weather to cold, when a report came in the usual course that a boy calling himself Rāmchunderji, and a girl said to be his wife, had been found in a

jasmine garden outside the city, half dead of exhaustion and without any ostensible means of livelihood. They had been taken up as vagrants and sent to hospital, pending Government orders. Now the Jubilee year was coming to a close, leaving behind it a legacy of new charities throughout the length and breadth of India. Of some the foundation stone only had been laid by direct telegram to the Queen-Empress; others had sprung to life in a manner suggestive of workmen's tenements. Among the latter was a Female Boarding School and Orphanage for the children of high-caste Hindoos, which had been built and endowed by a member of rich contractors and usurers, not one of whom would have sent their daughters to it for all their hoarded wealth. Persistent pennies had attracted a creditable, if intermittent, supply of day-scholars to its stucco walls; but despite an appropriate inscription in three languages over the gate the orphanage remained empty. Money can do much, but it cannot produce homeless orphans of good family in a society where the patriarchal system lingers in all its crass disregard of the main chance. So at the first hint of Seeta I was besieged on all sides. A real live, genuine, Hindoo female orphan going a begging! Preposterous! Sacrilegious! The Chairman of the Orphanage Committee almost wept as he pictured the emptiness of those white walls, and actually shed tears over the building estimates which he produced in order to strengthen his claim to poor little Seeta. Was it fair, he asked, that such a total of munificent charity should not have a single orphan to show the Commissioner-sahib when he came on tour? His distress touched me. Then winter, hard on the poor even in sunlit India, was on us; besides, Narayan Das tempted me further, with suggestions of a Jubilee Scholarship at the district school for Rāmhunderji himself.

I broke it very gently to the boy as he lay on a mat in the sun, slowly

absorbing warmth and nourishment. He was too weak to contest the point, but I felt bad, exceedingly, when I saw him turn face down as if the end of all things was upon him. I knew he must be whispering confidences to Mother Earth respecting that happy time before the flood, and I slunk away as though I had been whipped.

Now, if in telling this veracious history I seem too intermittent, I can but offer as an excuse the fact that an official's work in India is like that of a Jacquard loom. A thread slips forward, shows for a second, and disappears; a pause, and there it is again. Sometimes not until the pattern is complete, is it possible to realise that the series of trivial incidents has combined to weave an indelible record on the warp and woof. So it was early January before the Rāmhunderji shuttle stirred again. Narayan Das came to me with a look on his face suggestive that neither the *Rig-Veda* nor *The Spectator* was entirely satisfactory. The boy, he said, was not a bad boy, though he seemed absolutely unable to learn; but his influence on Standard I. was strictly non-regulation, nor did any section of the educational code apply to the case. If I would come down at recess time, I could see and judge for myself what ought to be done. When I reached the playground the bigger boys were at *krikutts* (cricket) or gymnastics, the medium ones engaged on marbles, but in a sunny corner backed by warm brick walls sate Rāmhunderji surrounded by a circle of Standard I. Small as he was, he was still so much larger than the average of the class, that, as he leant his high yellow turban against the wall, with half-closed eyes and hands upon his knees, the memory of Indra's court came back to me once more. He was reciting something in a low voice, and as the children munched popcorn or sucked sweets their eyes never left his face.

"Look!" said Narayan Das in a whisper from our spying-ground behind the master's window. The song

came to an end, a stir circled through the audience, and one by one the solid children of the fields, and the slender, sharp little imps of the bazaars, rose up and put something into the singer's lap. A few grains of corn, a scrap of sweet stuff, and as they did so each said in turn, "Salaam, Rāmchunderji!" "No wonder the boy has grown fat," I whispered dropping the reed screen round which I had been peeping.

Narayan Das shook his head. "If it were only comestibles," he replied gravely, "I could arrange; but when they are devoid of victuals they give their slate-pencils, their ink-pots, even their First-Lesson books. Then, if nobody sees and stops, there is vacancy when such things are applied for. Thus it is subversive of discipline and parents object to pay. Besides the *in forma-paupervis* pupils come on contingent with great expense to Government."

I looked through the screen again with a growing respect for Rāmchunderji. "Does he eat them too?" I asked.

The head-master smiled the sickly smile of one who is not quite sure if his superior officer intends a joke, and fell back as usual on quotation, "The ostrich is supposed by some to digest nails, but—"

I laughed aloud, and being discovered, went out and spoke seriously to the offender. His calm was not in the least disturbed. "I do not ask, or beg," he replied; "they give of their hearts and their abundance, as in old days before the flood. Is it my fault if they possess slate-pencils and ink-pots, and First-Lesson books?"

I must confess that this argument seemed to me unanswerable, but I advised him, seeing that the flood *had* come, to return such offerings in future to the store. He did not take my advice, and, about a week after, being discovered selling these things to the bigger boys at a reduced price, he was caned by the head-master.

That night he disappeared from the boarding-house and was no more seen. His name was removed from the rolls, his scholarship forfeited for absence without leave, and the arrears absorbed in refunds for slate-pencils and ink-pots. So that was an end of Rāmchunderji's schooling, and Standard I. once more became amenable to the Code.

Winter was warming to spring, the first bronze vine leaves were budding, and the young wheat shooting to silvery ears before the Commissioner, coming his rounds, was taken in pomp to visit the Orphanage and its occupants. I remember it so well. The Committee and the Commissioner, and I, and every one interested in female orphans and female education, on one side of a red baize table decorated with posies of decayed rosebuds and jasmīn in green-glass tumblers; and on the other Seeta and the matron. The former, to enhance her value as a genuine high-caste waif, was still a mere bundle, and I fancied she looked smaller than ever; perhaps because the veil was not so large. Then the accounts were passed, and the matron's report read. Nothing, she said, could be more satisfactory than the general behaviour and moral tone of the inmate, except in one point. And this was the feeding of the monkeys, which as every one knew, infested the town. The result being that the *bunder-lôg* had become bold even to the dropping down of stones into the court; quite large stones, such as the one placed as a stepping-stone over the runnel of water from the well.

Here I unguardedly suggested an air-gun; whereupon Narayan Das who always attended these functions as an educational functionary, reminded me reproachfully that monkeys were sacred to the god Hunumân, who, if I remembered, had finally rescued Seeta from the ten-headed, many-armed monster Râvana, the inventor of the *ravanastron* or beggar's fiddle.

It was at this juncture that I

suddenly became aware that the Jacquard loom of Fate was weaving a pattern; Râmchunderji! Seeta! the exile! the killing of the wild beasts! the ten-headed, many-handed monster, Râvana! Yet I could tell you almost every word of the Commissioner's speech, though he prosed on for the next ten minutes complacently about the pleasure he felt, and the authorities felt, and the whole civilised world felt, at seeing "Money, the great curse and blessing of humanity, employed as it should be employed, in snatching the female orphan of India from unmerited misfortune and educating her to be an example to the nineteenth century." Every one was highly delighted, and the Committee approached me with a view of adding the Commissioner's name as a second title to the school.

But I awaited the completion of the pattern. It was on the eleventh of April, that is to say, on the High Festival of Spring, at the fair held beside the tank where humanity in thousands was washing away the old year, and putting on the new in the shape of gay-coloured clothing, that my attention was attracted by a small, dense crowd whence came hearty guffaws of laughter.

"'Tis a performing monkey," said a bearded villager in response to my question as to what was amusing them so hugely. "The boy makes him do tricks worthy of Hunumân; yet he saith he taught him yonder down by the canal. Will not the Protector of the Poor step in and see? Ho, ho! 'twould make a suitor laugh even if the *digri* [decree] were against him." But I recognised the pattern this time, and I had made up my mind not to interfere with the shuttle again. As I turned away, another roar of laughter and a general feeling in pockets

and turbans, told me that the final tip had succeeded, and that collection was going on satisfactorily.

A few days later the Chairman of the Committee came to me in excited despair. The real, genuine, female Hindoo orphan was not to be found, and the stucco walls were once more empty. Enquiries were made on all sides, but when it came out, casually, that a boy, a girl, and a monkey, had taken a third-class ticket to Benares I said nothing. I was not going to aid Râvana, or prevent the due course of incarnation, if it *was* an incarnation. That great city of men, women, and monkeys, should give the trio fair play.

Last year, when I was in Simla, I overheard a traveller giving his impressions of India to a lady who was longing all the time to find out from a gentleman with a moustache when the polo-match was to begin at Annandale next day.

"The performing troupes are certainly above the European average," he said. "At Benares especially I remember seeing a monkey; he, his master, and a girl, did quite a variety of scenes out of the Râmâyana, and really, considering who they were I—"

"Excuse me,—but—oh! Captain Smith, is it half-past eleven or twelve?"

The *vina* still hangs in my collection next the *ravanastron*. Sometimes I take it down and sound the strings. But the waving palms, the odorous thickets, and the shadowy, immortal forms have got mixed up somehow with that infernal humming and bummung of the four-anna bit. So I get no help in trying to decide the question,—“Who was Râmchunderji?”

F. A. STEEL.